NEWS / A2

Power firms may absorb 12% VAT on systems loss

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO gave energy officials the go-signal to pursue measures that could cut the cost of electricity in the country by 64 centavos per kilowatt-hour within the year.

Among the measures, which Ms Arroyo approved at yesterday's Cabinet meeting, were negotiations with power distribution utilities to absorb by next month the 12-percent value-added tax (VAT) on systems loss. The loss is being

POWER A2

METRO / A25

11 Magdalo officers change plea to guilty

NEWS / A2

Robbers break into doc's house, stab family members, set home on fire

ENTERTAINMENT / E1

SWS: More Filipinos pessimistic about RP economy

Thousands mourn 'Daboy,' just as he wished

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Wednesday, June 11, 2008 ★ Vol. 23 / No. 187 website: www.inquirer.net

Anti-Meralco VACC calls for boycott of Juday

By Tina G. Santos

JUDAY HAS A NEW name, "Miss System Loss."

The Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) gave Judy Ann "Juday" San-

ANTI-MERALCO VACC A6

Abus holding TV crew in Sulu jungle

Drilon, 2 ABS-CBN cameramen, prof seized

By Julie S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—GUNmen believed to belong to the Abu Sayyaf are holding broadcast journalist Ces Drilon of ABS-CBN, her two cameramen and a professor of Mindanao State University (MSU) after abducting them in Maimbung, Sulu, on Sunday afternoon.

Drilon, cameramen Jimmy Encarnacion and Angelo Valderama, and Prof. Octavio Dinampo were seized by armed men in Barangay Lakbuk, an isolated area, Maimbung Mayor Hajib Malabas said yesterday.

The gunmen were purportedly led by Albader Parad of the Abu Sayyaf and Gafur Jamdad of the Moro National Liberation Front Misuari breakaway group.

Foreign news agencies, citing police sources, reported that the abductors were Abu Sayyaf bandits who had been involved in previous kidnappings in the province.

Quoting witnesses, Malabas said Drilon and company, along with the driver and the dispatcher of the Tamano sport pickup they were riding in, were held at gunpoint in Lakbuk while on their way to Barangay Kalusi 10-12 kilometers away.

"Before they could get to Kalusi, they had to pass two more barangays—Buta Ligis and Kapak Punggal," the mayor said. "They were on the main highway in Lakbuk when the Tamanos was stopped."

Lakbuk is not a populated community, according to Malabas.

"Coconut farms are all you'll see," he said. "And when you enter Lakbuk, you'll have to walk because the road is impassable by motor vehicle."

Lakbuk is also the route used by Moro National Liberation Front forces and Abu Sayyaf bandits traveling from the

ABUS HOLDING A12

CONFIDENTIAL ASSIGNMENT Ces Drilon (right), one of the star reporters/anchors of ABS-CBN, with her crew and guide left without military escorts reportedly to do more exclusive interviews. Trusted guide Octavio Dinampo is a professor at Mindanao State University and chair of Sulu's Bantay Ceasefire and Mindanao People's Caucus. In February, he was photographed checking out the shrapnel from a rocket-propelled grenade during a visit by the GRP-MILF Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Post to Datu Piang, Maguindanao.

PHOTOS

Why Inquirer didn't run story

By Abraham Papa

THE BIGGEST STORY ON MONDAY did not come out the next day in the Inquirer or in any of its competitors.

But broadcasting giant ABS-CBN yesterday maintained it had good reason to hold the story on the abduction of its senior correspondent Ces Drilon and her crew in Sulu by armed men said to be members of the Abu Sayyaf, and to ask other media outfits to do the same.

Boy Osorio, head of ABS-CBN corporate communications, said the network made a "gentle request" to other news agencies to "embargo" the story.

"The request was made primarily for the security and safety of Ces and her companions. At that time (Monday), we did not know what their situation was. We didn't want

WHY INQUIRER A12

How Inquirer reporter eluded abduction

By Julie S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—I WOULD HAVE become the fifth person in the group abducted in Sulu had not my son John Kenneth and Inquirer Mindanao bureau chief Nico Alconaba objected to my joining the coverage.

I admit that when Alconaba told me, I was still open to the idea of going to Sulu because my security had been assured and I would be traveling with Ces Drilon and her crew.

I was confident that when I filed my report in the bureau once I got home, Alconaba would not be angry that I went against his order.

But when finally the schedule was arranged, I had to beg off because my son's nanny had left for a summer vacation and was not due back soon.

I also asked my son if I could go away for a day or two in Sulu.

He said: "Again? There might be a bomb there. It's OK if you take me with you. If not, definitely not."

I always leave my son at home whenever

HOW INQUIRER A4

JULIE ALIPALA An invitation to an exclusive interview

They kept asking about ransom, TV journalist recalls

By Arlyn dela Cruz
Contributor

THEY SAY NO STORY IS WORTH DOING for—yet journalists can sometimes be lured to real dangers that can cost us our lives. We can be very trusting, perhaps because we expect to be trusted in return.

In a place like Sulu, journalists come mainly for stories arising from its long history of war and violence.

Sulu gave me my first exclusives in the world of Moro rebels, setting me off on a journalistic career now spanning almost two decades.

But it was also there that I had the most agonizing chapter of my life, when I was kidnapped by a group of gunmen in Indanan town on Jan. 20, 2002, as my way to do a follow-up on the hostage crisis involving American missionaries Martin and Gracia Burnham.

My abductors—men wearing military fa-

THEY KEPT A4

SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS Elementary students are locked out of what used to be their school, the Biarmino High School in Project 4, Quezon City. The local government is converting the school into a sports complex. (Story in Metro, Page A25.)

Lots of money for computers, none for rulers, microscopes

(Third of a series)

FOR THREE DAYS LAST month, about 50 public school teachers in Science and Math attended a workshop that introduced them to microscopes and showed them how to illustrate space using graphing paper because they had no rulers in their classrooms.

It was an exercise in improvisation and a common-sense approach to teaching in the face of a dearth of learning materials that seemed ironic amid moves by the Arroyo administration to spend tons of money and pursue "open and distance learning" via cyberspace.

The event was sponsored by Marikina City, University of the Philippines-National Institute for Science and Mathematics Education Development (Nismed) and the Department of Education as part of a program to lift the quality of basic education for which the administration allocates P1012 billion annually.

The teachers collected specimens from the nearby Marikina River, put them under the microscopes made available free of charge by a local distributor,

LOTS OF A13

T-TEAM Report
Fernando del Mundo
Chief
EDUCATION

Filipinos relearn English from Peace Corps volunteers

By Allison W. Lopez

USING SONGS SHE HERSELF had written, a 25-year-old American Peace Corps volunteer is teaching high school students here to speak good English.

"Eh, they're not that great," she says, playing down her compositions. "It's not anything that amazing, just mainly conjugations," says the volunteer, identified here as "Melissa" as the US agency had requested that names of the volunteers

FILIPINOS A13

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 2008

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Isolated showers and thunderstorms will accompany mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times mostly cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly cloudy	Legaspi	Partly cloudy
Baguio	Partly cloudy	Naga	Partly cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly cloudy	Cebu	Partly cloudy
Iloilo	Partly cloudy	Dumaguete	Mostly cloudy
Kalibo	Partly cloudy	Gen. Santos	Mostly cloudy
Puerto Princesa	Partly cloudy	Zamboanga	Mostly cloudy
Cagayan de Oro	Partly cloudy	Tuguegarao	Mostly cloudy
Davao	Partly cloudy	Basco	Mostly cloudy

Tips on your feedback: inquirer.news.tips@gmail.com or 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Second FRONTPAGE

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Magdalo rebs change plea to guilty

More Filipinos pessimistic on economy, says survey

AMID SOARING PRICES OF food and oil, more Filipinos feel pessimistic about how the economy will fare over the rest of the year and into the next, according to a Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey.

The First Quarter 2008 Social Weather Survey found that 49 percent of Filipino adults are pessimistic about the economy over the next 12 months, up from 37 percent in December.

Only Filipinos (30 percent) also said that their personal quality of life had worsened compared to a year ago, up from 45 percent in December.

The survey also found that only 17 percent are optimistic about the economy, up from 13 percent.

These figures brought the net economic optimism to minus 29, down from minus 20 in December.

The survey, which was conducted from March 28 to March 31, asked the question: "In the next 12 months, what do you think will happen to the Philippine economy?"

Better or worse?

The respondents were then asked to answer whether they think it would be better, would stay the same, or would be worse.

Those who answered that the economy would be better were called "optimists" while those who answered it would be worse were called "pessimists." Net optimism is the difference between the percentage of optimists and pessimists, correctly rounded.

"Optimism about the future [of the economy] is based on a question about the economy in general and not about oneself in particular. It is nonetheless the more optimistic about one's own quality of life than about the economy as a whole," the SWS said in a statement released yesterday.

The same survey also found that about a third, or 29 percent, of Filipinos were optimistic about improving their personal quality of life over the next 12 months, while 23 percent were pessimistic, feeling that it would get worse.

This brought net personal optimism, the difference of personal optimists over pessimists, to a "merely neutral" 6.

Worsened

Comparing their personal quality of life now from a year ago, half of Filipinos surveyed said their lives had worsened. However, the survey also found 38 percent saying their lives had improved, barely changed from 39 percent in December.

This brought the gap between the gainers (those whose lives improved from last year) and losers (those whose lives worsened) at minus 11 points.

"Since the start of 2006, the gainers-losers gap has been below 20 points in five out of 11 SWS survey rounds. The latest gainers-losers gap of minus 11, however, is a full back to the levels of 2001 to 2005, when the gap was never less than 21 points, and reached as high as 42," the SWS said.

Resistance about the economy worsened in all areas, the survey found. Net economic optimism fell in the Visayas to minus 37 in March from minus 17 in December, while it also fell in Metro Manila (from minus 11 to minus 35), in the rest of Luzon (from minus 24 to minus 28), as well as to Mindanao (from minus 9 to minus 21).

Across socioeconomic classes, pessimism worsened among class D (from minus 20 to minus 33) and E (from minus 17 to minus 28). Among members of classes ABC, it became slightly more negative from minus 27 to minus 28.

The survey was conducted from March 28 to March 31 using face-to-face interviews with 1,200 adults divided into random samples of 300 each in Metro Manila, the balance of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. It had a margin of error of plus/minus 3 percentage points. — **Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research**

No concessions, says AFP

By Nikko Dizon

AFTER MEETING BRIEFLY with Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Alexander Yano yesterday morning, 11 rank leaders of the Magdalo group of rebellious military officers changed their not guilty pleas to guilty at their court-martial.

"They wanted to deliver the message (to Yano) that they were willing to cooperate with the Armed Forces of the Philippines," said Irlyandro Abaya, the officers' lawyer.

"I think the officers' move was welcome to him (Yano)," Abaya added.

Abaya told reporters that changing their plea had always been a "legal option" for the rebel officers.

"They can still continue with what they believe in even as civilians and cooperate with the AFP as civilians. They have the AFP into very, or marched," the lawyer said.

The officers who changed their pleas were Lieutenants Senior Grade James Layug, Eugene Louie Gonzales, Andy Torres and Manuel Cabochan, Ltjg. Ariano Faustino and Ensign Armas Fernajes from the Philippine Navy; Capts. Gary Alejano and 2nd Lt. Antonel Sungahing from the Marines, and Capts. Segundino Ordiano Jr. and First Lieutenants Billy Pascua and Felicisimo Aldaba, all recently from the Air Force.

The 11 were undergoing court-martial for violation of Article of War 96, or Conduct Unbecoming an Officer and a Gentleman, for their roles in the Oakwood mutiny of 2003. The maximum sentence under Article 96 is a dishonorable discharge from the AFP.

Separate criminal trial

The 11 are undergoing a separate criminal trial on coup d'etat charges in a Makati City Regional Trial Court, Abaya said.

The group, except for Aldaba, also took part in the takeover of Peninsula Manila hotel on Nov. 29, 2007, that was led by Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, himself a former Magdalo leader, and Army Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim.

Like the Oakwood mutiny, the Peninsula incident was intended to highlight the Magdalo group's call for an end to corruption in government and the resignation of ranking officials, including President Arroyo.

According to AFP spokesperson Lt. Col. Romeo Tuvera, four of the 11 rebel officers—Layug, Gonzales, Alejano and Ordiano—asked to meet with Yano during a break in the court-martial proceedings.

The meeting in Yano's office at Camp Aguinaldo—where the trial was being held—lasted about 10 minutes, according to Alejano and lead military prosecutor Col. Sherlo Herrera Dardia, who were present.

Tuvera said no concessions or deals were made by either side.

Yano only promised the junior officers they would receive a fair trial, Tuvera said.

The rebel officers in turn, Tuvera said, vowed to support the AFP and help it in any way they could to overcome its many problems.

Last month, nine colleagues of the 11 core Magdalo officers changed their not guilty pleas to guilty—not only at their court-martial but in their coup d'etat case.

They were Army Capts. Gerardo Gambala, Milo Maestrecampo, Alvin Rhino Laurence Louis Somoza, Albert Baloloy and Nicanor Faeldon and Navy Lieutenants Somoza and Cleo Bonggat-as and 2nd Lt. Alexander Reyno Yanoy.

'Mercy and grace'

They received a pardon from President Macapagal-Arroyo after they were sentenced to from 12 to 40 years in prison and had sought her "mercy and grace."

This leaves Trillanes, the acknowledged leader and spokesperson of the Magdalo group, and other core leaders like Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon and four others to face the military and civilian trials.

The four are Army 1Lt. Pharex Lee Dagupen and Marine Second Lieutenants Alquin Gaisano, Jonathan Tolo and Felimon Lee.

Gaisano, Tolo and Dagupen were the only Magdalo sub-leaders not to enter into a plea bargain with the government last year.

Faeldon remains at large after he escaped from the Peninsula as the military and police were storming the hotel.

Trillanes, who ran for a Senate seat while in detention, was automatically discharged from the military service when he won election.

Earlier, 32 other Magdalo leaders who were charged with the same offenses entered into a plea bargain with the government and were sentenced to time served in detention.

They were released in December last year after being pardoned by President Arroyo.

Yesterday's court-martial hearing for the 11 officers did not start until 1:30 p.m.

The prosecution was ready to present Army Capt. Frederick Windell Sobong as a witness when Abaya told the court his clients wanted to change their pleas to guilty.

This prompted the seven-member military tribunal led by its president, Brig. Gen. Nathaniel Lagaga, to summon to the accused one days later the "mandatory punishment of dishonorable discharge from the military service" if their pleas guilty to the charge.

One by one, the 11 accused stood before the court and said they were changing their pleas to guilty.

CARP extension will have to wait for next session

By TJ Burgonio

LAWMAKERS WILL HAVE TO WAIT until the next regular session for Congress to pass a certified bill extending a key component of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, Speaker Prospero Pichay said yesterday.

Nograles said the House of Representatives could pass its version of the measure, but doubted if the Senate could do likewise this before Congress adjourn this week.

He said it was useless to hold a special session if the Senate failure to pass its version. Also, President Macapagal-Arroyo herself has not indicated that she would call for a special session.

"Even if we pass it tonight or tomorrow, they really have to wait because the Senate will have to pass it," Nograles said when asked if the farmers would wait for the next regular session for the approval of the measure.

The second regular session of the 14th Congress starts on July 28.

Pichay approved in both chambers have a proposal for seeking to extend the land acquisition and distribution (LAD) component of the CARP by another five years from yesterday.

The Department of Agrarian Reform has to distribute at least 1.1 million hectares of agricultural land under the LAD, including 586,000 hectares this year.

The House was set to wrap up interpellation on the measure yesterday in order to the hope of getting it approved on second and third reading against the strong opposition of landed lawmakers.

"I don't think we have a problem here in the House. I think that an overwhelming majority here agreed to have the CARP extended. It's just a question of putting the safety net in place," Nograles said.

Alliance party-list Rep. Rufus Rodriguez, leader of the principal authors, however, said that the "loudmouth" in "silence with leftist voices" from the Senate line were out to block the passage of the bill, or water it down.

The fate of the proposed legislation hangs in the Senate because the measure is lacking an approval until the LAD submits a bill accounting of the CARP funds for the past 20 years.

"There's no CARP without the Senate... There can be no law without the Senate," Nograles said.

In Iloilo City, farmers marched on the streets, demanding a new agrarian reform law and rejecting the extension of the CARP.

Around 700 members of the Pinglaysang sang mga Mangunguma sa Panay-Kay Gumamela (United Farmers of Panay-Kay Gumamela) from the southern and central towns of Iloilo along with protesters belonging to other militant organizations yesterday held a protest rally at the grounds of the provincial capitol.

With a report from Nestor J. Burgos Jr. and Carla B. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas

They kept asking about ransom …

By Inquirer staff

Ignore hooking the insignia of the "Tribal Tiger Infantry Division"—striped tee on the breast of Binangkit Tindikog and field insertings for 90 days.

They thought I was delivering the extraction money for the Burdianos. "What extraction are you talking about?" I asked.

I did not get any response. Instead I was stopped in the face, and pushed several feet into a node. I was ordered to undress and change into an outfit they threw at my face. Someone pointed a gun at my forehead to stop me from asking further questions.

Then they made me board a boat, tied my hands, and forced me to lay flat on my face. They took me to an island, which they said was still part of Tawi-Tawi. We rode a mountain road that kept me to a halt.

For meals, I was often given rice, sardines, and coconut water. A week later I was relocated, again by boat.

Text messages

One day they blindfolded and interrogated me regarding the text messages I was still getting on my mobile phone. Later in the night they pushed me into a shallow pit—and then someone pissed on me.

In the next few days, they kept asking me about the ransom. The torturer only subdued when they learned me were to another group to end the first week of February.

The torture rules allowed for some conversation between me and a man named Lakandula, one of their leaders.

"When will you, reporters, stop writing stories about the fighting in Sulu? Is that all what you reporters are after?" Lakandula then wondered aloud. "You write your report and that is it. It will just work for you. Is that it? Just another 'scoop' from Jolo?"

I remember the two of us having this exchange inside a hut, and outside we could see a group of women passing by.

"Do you see those women, their children? Everyday they have to walk for several kilometers to draw water from the river. Why? Because they don't have a source of water near their homes."

Flashback

Those moments came back to me on Monday, after I got a call from a radio correspondent asking whether I've heard the news that ABS-CBN reporter Ces Drilon and her crew have gone missing—again in Sulu.

I phoned my sources in that province, mostly local officials, and received confirmation about Ces and her crew's fate.

A journalist following his or her instinct would file that story right away. But remembering what had happened to me, my unsolicited advice at this stage is to keep parliament details of the negotiations confidential—if indeed there's already one—as secret in the safety of Ces and her crew.

When I returned to Sulu in August last year, more than five years after my kidnapping, it was at the invitation of a local official who asked me whether the media, that time we met, could still do something about Sulu's "image crisis."

Media's role

I was then asked to deliver a talk on the "role of the media in peace and development."

Ironically, my host who made such a request was none a frontrunner warrior Ishmael Abu Asahi Tulalik, a former commander of the Moro National Liberation Front. He was the first MNLF leader to have granted me an interview way back in 1981.

In his invitation letter, Abu Asahi wrote: "The succession will not stop at once for as long as rebels do nothing else in the mountains and the military continues to launch offensives against them.

"But is there nothing else other than this that is worth reporting?"

The question practically echoed that of Lakandula, leader of the Tausug group that put his through a 90-day ordeal.

Part-day-day leader-day host, Lakandula, pointing to the group of women on their way to the river, wanted to know: "Haven't you thought of how you can help them?"

How Inquirer …

By Inquirer staff

I covet Sulu.

When a friend contacted me early on Monday to tell me that Drilon and three others were missing, I freelance public-minded, especially when the name of Pool Orosa's Dimaampo was mentioned.

It was Dimaampo, chair of Sulu's Bishop Center Board and concerned by efforts of Telang Lupah Sug. who invited the Inquirer in May to an exclusive coverage of the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu.

Dimaampo's credibility and his reputation as an educator at Mindanao State University in Sulu have made him one of Inquirer Mindanao's regular sources of information.

He has access to the Moro National Liberation Front and also has a database of information on the Muslim world.

The first time Dimaampo offered to facilitate coverage was during a fact-finding mission undertaken in Mindanao, Sulu, on Feb. 20.

I had to turn down the offer because of time and financial constraints.

The second invitation to a coverage of the Abu Sayyaf was made during the March 29 commemoration of the Jolo kidnappings, when Dimaampo and members of nongovernment and civil society organizations marched from Cagayan de Oro City to Cotabato.

Dimaampo then said the coverage in Sulu would be conducted together with Drilon, but the location detailed to pass on their case because ABS-CBN wanted an exclusive report.

Taboo

Dimaampo's chief instruction to the kidnapers, made in said May, came in the form of a text message.

He told us interview had been arranged with an Abu Sayyaf personality, but that the "source" might demand some "incentive"—say a mobile phone—or a confidence-building measure.

I forwarded the message to Mercedes, who promptly objected, citing the Inquirer policy on charges of such nature.

Mercedes also raised outstanding issues in the security assignments when the "source" later dropped their demand for a "token" just to accommodate the keynote.

Dimaampo was the first person to report that a sniper was stalked in Tawi-Tawi was not the Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist Dulmatin. He also led the fact-finding mission in Mainbung that looked into the killing of eight people, including a pregnant woman and two children, allegedly by soldiers.

He also earlier questioned the proposed rice shortage, pointing out that Sulu was one of the provinces in the region that sold cost cheaper but high-quality rice.

Correction

IN THE APR. 9 ISSUE, Neal H. Cruz's "At I See It" column on Page A11 of the Opinion section, "The enemy pitfalls of Ms. Arroyo" misidentified and the previous "Ms." in the first paragraph "Bad Court Judge Wilhelmina Tumaysa. Tumaysa is male.

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors to us by mail to the Ace Pool, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PSE Building, Ortigas Center, Pasig City, Metro Manila; Mandaluyong City, fax 896-6057 or 897-2638, e-mail letters_dpi@inquirer.com.ph.

A complaint about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to the Public Editor, e-mail address: publiceditor@inquirer.com.ph or fax 896-6057 or 897-2638, 896-6214 or 897-2638 local 300.

Medics tell of devastation in Burma

By Tarra Quismundo

AIR MARSHAL WILLIAM HABACON, A.NA-tive of the typhoon-prone Bicol region, said the devastation he saw in Burma's Irrawaddy delta (the worst hit by cyclone Nargis last month), was "like nothing he had ever seen before."

"Look to the right, to the left, to the front and back, there was not a single structure...it was like a straw," said Habacon, a member of a 30-member Philippine humanitarian assistance and disaster relief mission allowed direct access to the disaster area by the Burmese military junta.

"Imagine your whole basic values all human were destroyed, school buildings without roofs. And it was already 24 days since the cyclone hit," said Lt. Aneel Rivera who led the Philippine contingent that returned Monday night after a 13-day mission.

Composed of doctors, nurses, paramedics, environmental conditions experts and social workers, the team logged 13 tons of medicine and relief goods through four towns in Irrawaddy and Pegu.

Over 78,000 people were reportedly killed when Cyclone Nargis, packing 193 kph winds, slammed through the delta.

"Most of the people we talked to lost their entire families," said social worker Jing Guerrero.

At one evacuation center, the team taught teachers an improvised water filtration method using coloring and sand and gravel.

"After our demonstration, we both sip the resulting bottle of clear water. A child grabbed it and drank it straight. That's how thirsty the people there were," Habacon said.

A top concern was sanitation in the areas they visited and residents required water for drinking, washing, cooking and bathing from nearby ponds or collected rainwater.

Unlike the Philippines, where typhoons are part of the annual weather cycle, Burma is not familiar with such strong winds. Typhoon Nargis, sweeping low at 220 kph above the plains, came with deadly surprise.

The Burmese junta initially banned foreign aid workers. But it opened up after a donors conference initiated by the United Nations and hosted by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), of which Burma is a member.

The members of the Philippine mission reported they were warmly welcomed and feted in a reception "fit for dignitaries" on their arrival in Yangon. They were provided with a cargo truck.

But some civilian officials and soldiers accompanied them throughout the mission, said Rivera.

"We were accompanied... We didn't feel that a problem, they were already well organized, the system was already in place. We never implied that we were doing anything other than assisting," Rivera said.

But added Habacon: "The hard to get a clearance but can every move."

For the team spirit stayed strong. "We were there to help," Habacon said.

Loren seeks quick refund from Meralco

By Cynthia D. Rubino

SEN. LOREN LEGARDA YESTERDAY urged the Manila Electric Company (Meralco) to immediately refund customers P2.1-billion worth of excess and bill deposits—plus interest—which the power distribution company had collected since the 1990s.

Legarda said the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC), in its clarificat on June 4 and related resolution and other private distribution utilities to start issuing the refunds six months after the effectivity of the rules.

In previous orders, the commission consistently ruled that excess and bill deposits exist 10 percent per annum.

Legarda said the ERC order to refund is mandatory and immediate.

"Why do people have to wait years when the funds are held in trust? The consumers have suffered long enough," she said.

"The consumers suffered even more when the order to issue a refund in 2004 was made void because the order did not like a forge while ERC sat on the guidelines. Will consumers wait forever to get a refund of the money they rightfully own? The amount must be paid together with the principal," the senator added.

Legarda also said the ERC should stop giving in to Meralco's requests for more time. Instead, it should compel Meralco to implement the refund, including interest, and to place the whole amount in a bank in the name of the consumers or a cooperative.

House body OKs Transco franchise bill

THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLA-tive franchises yesterday approved the bill granting the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines a nationwide franchise to manage the national power transmission system owned by the National Transmission Corp.

The NGCP consortium is made up of Monte Oro Grid Resources Corp., Calaca High Power Corp., and the Henk Grid Corp. of China. The consortium won the bidding conducted by the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. last last year.

House Bill No. 3729 was authored by House leaders, including Speaker Prospero Nograles, Majority Floor Leader Arthur Defensor, Senior Deputy Majority Leader Raphael Gonzalez II, and Committee Vice Rep. Luis Villafuerte.

Makati City Rep. Teodoro Locsin presided over the committee hearing yesterday afternoon where the bill was passed by the panel.

"There were many amendments and these will be taken up in the plenary," Locsin said.

One of Mayor Ong's partners reportedly included businessman Enrique Razon, who acted as the administration camp's treasurer in the 2007 elections.

Power firms may absorb 12% VAT on systems loss

Front page A1
passed on to consumers.

This measure, if implemented next month, would translate to a 7-percent per kwH reduction in power rate, said Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, head of the ready group that presented its recommendations to the Cabinet.

Systems loss refers to electricity lost to pilferage, faulty wiring, power rates, and electricity used by Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) for its operations.

In a briefing following the Cabinet meeting, Teves said the group reported to Ms Arroyo its "preliminary assessment that will have immediate impact on the cost of electricity within the year."

Flat rate

Other measures that Ms Arroyo approved:

• For Meralco, the country's biggest power distributor, to buy from state-owned National Power Corp. electricity at the flat rate of P4.11 per kwH. This could reduce rates by 56 centavos per kwH.

• For the Energy Regulatory Commission to review the cap on recoverable systems loss and explore the further reduction in the current limit of 9.8 percent to 8 percent to 10.5 percent.

For every percentage point reduction in systems loss, rates drop by 6 centavos per kwH in Luzon and 7 centavos per kwH in the Visayas and Mindanao.

• For local government units to implement the national wealth tax on subsidies in which 60 percent of their share will be taxed to lower electricity rates.

This could reduce the "distributed" subsidy shouldered by consumers using more than 200 kWh a month. The subsidy is given to households using less than 100 kWh a month.

• For the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza) to prepare for the implementation within economic zones of "open access," which allows companies to choose their power supplier. Meralco is now inclined to drop its opposition against the Peza open access, according to Teves.

Focus on Meralco

The Finance secretary acknowledged that its major focus was on "what reduction we can expect" from Meralco.

Last month, Mr Arroyo assigned her economic managers led by Teves to talk to Meralco and Pioneer Garcia, president of the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), to find ways to reduce power rates in the country.

At that time, the Lopezes, who has management control of Meralco, and the GSIS, a big shareholder of the utility, were squabbling over various allegations that mismanagement was among the reasons power rates were high.

Garcia said but failed to

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Anti-Meralco ...

Front page A1

on the number as it discovered the system for allowing himself to be used to justify Manila Electric Co.'s "unjust and oppressive practices" of passing on nationwide illegal charges to the consumers.

The group called on the public to keep on activities, television programs and products endorsed by Gomez.

Meralco's television and radio commercials showed Gomez saying that system loss in electric distribution firms was comparable to car bought from a store—part of which is lost to stealing—and brought home.

She explained that system loss was the same to the extent that ordinary electricity was delivered from the point of origin to its destination, some of it would be lost along the way.

Allowed by law

She also indicated that, like all distribution firms that charge for system loss, Meralco only passes on to consumers the cost allowed by law. Meralco has admitted that it is charging residential consumers up to 11 percent of its transmission.

Roberto Ongpin, Meralco first vice president for customer service, said at a House hearing on May 20 that the application of the law was well within the allowable limit of 9.1 percent.

He said this was because it uses being "averaged" among all customers, including residential and industrial power users.

Truth in advertising

Meralco should adhere to truth in advertising and let him use, an ABS-CBN reporter, quoting the whole truth about Meralco's controversial power charges," said Emer Jimenez, VACC founding chair. ABS-CBN is a network owned by the Lopezes, which have management control of Meralco, the country's biggest distributor of electricity.

Meralco thinks these the glitz and glamour can fool the people. It only adds insult to injury to consumers. The issue is not that simple as Ongpin would be going made to tell them. The issue is the system confuses the damage Meralco has inflicted on the people and how her ads have sent them deeper into suffering," Jimenez said as he led VACC members in tearing down the screen photos.

The VACC said the use by Meralco of a celebrity highlighted the firm's disproportionate and failure to explain the billions of pesos it overcharges customers each year.

"The Meralco ads is not entirely truthful. The analogy between electricity and stealing car is not precise and does not speak the whole truth about systems loss," the group said.

"The analogy about stealing is simplistic and does not account for system loss brought about by pilferage and company use."

In 2007, consumers shouldered P631 million worth of electricity that Meralco stole.

However, Lopez-owned First Philippine Holdings Corp., admits holds a 33.47-percent stake in Meralco, rather said the electricity marketing for cooking was used without regard to distance or transmission.

The company said it was but a means "to clarify within the constraints of the broadcast medium, the simple fact that industrial losses account for approximately 7% percent of system losses, while residential losses for 21percent, and [Meralco's] own use accounts for 2 percent."

Refund deposits

The VACC said the real issue was Meralco's unwillingness to refund deposits collected from purchases of expensive power from Lopez' IPPs (independent power producers). At passing of its own electric consumption to consumers, and its refusal to refund the billions of pesos to bill deposits.

As of end-2006, the bill deposits amounted to P16.3 billion. Meralco could refund by January its four million customers P2.7 billion for the interest deposits they have been paying since the 1980's when apply for the electric service.

Jimenez said the VACC was preparing for the filing of a class suit against Meralco, executives, National Power Corp. and the Energy Regulatory Commission.

"We are also calling for the officials of these companies to resign their posts," he said.

Sandigan junks Nani's petition to dismiss case

By TJ Burgonio

THE SANDIGANBAYAN HAS thrown out a petition from former Justice Secretary Hernando "Nani" Perez asking the court to junk the graft case against him in connection with the $3-million extortion complaint filed by businessman and former Manila congressman Mark Jimenez.

The anti-graft court's fourth division, chaired by Associate Justice Jose Hernandez, denied Perez's motion to quash for lack of merit.

Perez had argued that the complaint against him did not charge any offense, or even if it did cannot stand alone from a separate disinfection charge, and that the Sandiganbayan lacked jurisdiction over the case.

The court rejected his arguments, however.

"This court finds that the averments in the information are sufficient. The information states explicitly and directly every fact and circumstance necessary to constitute the offense charged," it said in a June 5 resolution.

The court also ruled that Perez's argument that the graft and falsification charges could not stand alone without the other was "devoid of merit."

"It is recommendable that the offenses charged in the two cases are not different. They are not under the same law and each consists of a different set of elements needed for the conviction of the accused," it said.

The court also maintained that the Sandiganbayan has jurisdiction over the case and that the Office of the Ombudsman had the authority to file the informations.

The former Justice secretary is facing another case of graft before the Plot Division, a case of robbery before the Second Division and a case of falsification of public documents before the Third Division.

His wife Rosario, brother-in-law Ramon Arroyo and business associate Ernest Bumatay were charged in his co-accused in one count of graft and the robbery case.

All the cases stemmed from charges that Perez tried to extort $2 million from Jimenez in exchange for his not disclosing the names of individuals involved in a bribery scandal that unraveled a power deal in 1998.

Charges surfaced that deposed President Joseph Estrada was offered $19 million to appease the rumpus between the National Power Corp. and its favorite firm to build and run a hydroelectric plant in Laguna.

Perez allegedly went to Jimenez, at the time Estrada's presidential adviser on Luis American affairs who is alleged to have brokered the deal, demanding $2 million in exchange for not revealing the names of those involved in the scandal.

Wives of missing Chinese traders ready to come to RP for probe

By Philip Tubeza

HONG KONG—THE WIVES OF TWO Chinese businessmen who disappeared almost a decade ago after Philippine authorities allegedly abducted them are ready to return to the country if the investigation into their husbands' disappearance is reopened, the Philippine consul general here said yesterday.

Consul General Alejandro Mosquera said in a press briefing that Wong Chit Sam and Lee Yuet Quereta, the wives of Chong Hin Ming and Wong Kam Chong, respectively, said in a letter to him that they were prepared to testify to find out what really happened to their husbands.

Chong, then 33, was reportedly abducted on Ongpin Street in Binondo, Manila, on Dec. 30, 1998, while Wong, then 32, in Bataan Village, Quezon City, on March 16, 1999. The two were never seen again.

Suspected traffickers

Police allegedly suspected the two men of having been engaged in drug trafficking.

Police investigators were said to be holding evidence that Chong and Wong were being monitored by Hong Kong and Philippine narcotics police from October 1998 to 1999.

Chong and Wong were two of five Chinese nationals who disappeared between 1998 and 2000 that state witness Hector "Rambo" Ong said had been kidnapped and killed by members of the then Presidential Anti-Crime Commission's Task Force Habagat Ong, a former PACC undercover agent, was testifying in a Senate investigation in 2001.

Opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson, the former national police chief who headed the PACC at the time, denied the charges.

But based on Ong's testimony, the Senate Committee on Government recommended the filing of kidnap and murder charges against Lacson and 13 other police officers.

The NBI was supposed to have informed Lee in May 2003 that it had submitted to the Department of Justice an affidavit recommending the prosecution of certain persons alleged to have been involved in the disappearance of her husband.

Unanswered questions

Mosquera said the two women went to the Philippine government in 2001 to inquire about their husband's disappearance but nothing came of it.

The women also said they had earlier asked the Chinese government and the Philippine consulate to look into the reported abductions.

However, the documents related to the Philippine police investigation into their husbands' alleged drug activities were never made available to the absence of a mutual legal assistance agreements between Hong Kong and the Philippines. The two signed such an agreement only in 2001.

The letter to Vicente this June was also addressed to the Chinese ambassador to Manila.

Mosquera also clarified that the women did not personally appear before the Philippine Consulate to seek to help but that their lawyer sent a letter on June 2.

"It just says that they would want the government to look into the case again and, if necessary, they could even go to the Philippines to testify if they could be helped in doing so," Vicente said.

Mosquera said the consulate sent the women's letter to the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila on June 3 and expected the DFA to forward it to the DOJ.

Reena Gonzalez, 34

REENA MARIA MOYA GONZALEZ PASSED away on June 8. She was 34. She is survived by her parents Rene and Carmen, brother RJ, sister-in-law Maye, and nieces Sam, Jess and Stella. Her body lies at La Funeraria Paz, Aurora Avenue, Quezon City. Cremation will be on June 12 at 2 p.m.

An Urgent Appeal to President Arroyo to call for a special session of Congress to pass CARP extension law

Today, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, the government's avowed flagship anti-poverty and social justice program, expires. The clamor for CARP extension goes unheeded. Congress will adjourn in a few days without passing the bill extending CARP.

Behind Congress's failure to pass the bill are the big landowners. They will be the greatest beneficiaries of the termination of the Land Acquisition and Distribution part of CARP for lack of an appropriation.. In effect, those who have defied the Constitution and the rule of law will be rewarded. Many will proceed to convert their lands into agro-industrial uses, notwithstanding the President's call for a moratorium on land conversion.

At least 1 million farmers or 6 million rural population would benefit from the distribution of the remaining CARP backlog of more than 2 million hectares, mostly private agricultural lands above 60 hectares. Their only chance to own land, end their poverty, and have a better future is CARP.

CARP's fate now rests in the hands of President Arroyo. She promised the farmers that she would fully support the extension of CARP. She certified the extension bill as urgent when there was very little time to pass it, after delays in the legislative process. The farmers are waiting and praying for her to do more.

We, individuals and groups representing a wide spectrum of the agrarian reform community, urge Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to call for a special session of Congress to pass the law extending CARP. She has done it in the past for other urgent bills. This is also the time for her to exercise her leadership of the majority coalition where much of the resistance to the bill is entrenched.

Mrs. President, the farmers are the poorest of the poor in our country. Please help them.

CARP's fate is in PGMA's hand

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AFTER LONG YEARS OF STRUGGLE, THE FILIPINO IS NOT ABOUT TO RAISE THE WHITE FLAG.

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Bantay Kalikasan helped save the La Mesa Watershed. Bantay Migrante's source of breaking news.

BAYANIJUAN is an umbrella project that puts together the various services of the ABS-CBN Foundation. These programs include Bantay Bata 163, looking after the rights, welfare and nutritional needs of children; E-Media, making good education accessible; Bantay Kalikasan, protecting the health and livelihood of Filipinos by protecting the environment; Sagip Kapamilya, re-building the lives of calamity victims; and Bayan Foundation, providing livelihood support through skills training and microfinance.

Bantay Bata 163 will help eliminate child exploitation.

Bayan Foundation provides livelihood support through skills training and microfinance.

The ABS-CBN Foundation has been doing its work for the past 55 years with the help of donors, partners and volunteers from both the government and the private sector. But we believe that the size of our current economic crisis can only be addressed by even bigger teams and more helping hands.

BAYANIJUAN will be formally launched on the 110th anniversary of Philippine independence just to remind ourselves that we must continue to dedicate ourselves to attaining freedom from poverty, hunger and hopelessness, but to make the next generation know that we fought for their destiny today.

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US chopper on mercy flight shot at

WASHINGTON—A US HELICOPTER ON A humanitarian mission in the Philippines apparently was shot at, prompting the Navy to temporarily halt the mission, a defense official said.

An HH-60 helicopter operating from USNS Mercy hospital ship had gone to pick up 11 passengers about 50 miles (80 kilometers) inland, and two bullet holes were found when the aircraft returned to the ship with the passengers.

"The holes appear to be an entry and exit point from a single bullet," Cmdr. Jeff A. Davis, a Navy spokesperson, said Monday.

It is unclear if the bullet struck while the passengers were on the helicopter, he said. There were no injuries and the aircraft's commander was unaware of any bullet striking the aircraft during the flight, Davis said.

The Mercy is anchored in Cotabato City, conducting Pacific Partnership '08, a humanitarian civic assistance mission between navies—and with non-governmental organizations—to provide medical, dental, construction and other services ashore and afloat.

"The USNS Mercy mission commander has ensured all Mercy Pacific Partnership activities until a proper assessment can be made," Davis said in an e-mail.

Nobody has claimed responsibility for the attack, but several armed groups operate in the area, including the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, communist New People's Army rebels, private armies and criminal gangs.

Ed Kalinda, spokesperson for the Moro Islamic organization, the Philippines' largest Muslim rebel group, condemned the attack.

"This is a humanitarian mission so we are fully supportive of it," said Kalinda. "Anything to hamper humanitarian action is condemnable." AP

3 importers linked to onion smuggling try

THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS HAS SUSPENDed three firms for being allegedly involved in the illegal importation of P22 million worth of onions and ginger from India, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

The companies—identified as Kaiser Trading, Mel Container Liner, and Sell International Trading—will no longer be allowed to transact with the bureau, said Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales.

"Although the firms have denied ownership of the shipments, they will still be subjected to investigation," Morales said.

He said the bureau would file criminal charges against the importers before the Department of Justice.

The shipments, which arrived at the Manila International Container Port between May 11 and June 2 on board the vessels, Eagle Excellence, Dover Strait and HB Paradise, were immediately seized by the the bureau's intelligence and investigation service.

Morales said the cargo arrived without the necessary import permits from the Bureau of Plant Industry.

"The shipment will immediately be destroyed to protect the interests of the local onion industry," he said, explaining that agricultural goods are considered regulated importations which require import permits and phyto-sanitary permits from the agriculture department.

"Those who fail to present the necessary clearances are barred from releasing the shipments," Morales stressed.

Margaux C. Ortiz

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, June 11, 2008
10th Week in Ordinary Time
Barnabas

1st Reading: Acts 11:21b-26; 13:1-3
Gospel: Mt 10:7-13

Jesus said to his disciples, "Do and proclaim this message: The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, bring the dead back to life, cleanse the lepers, and drive out demons. You received this as a gift, so give it as a gift. Do not carry any gold, silver or copper in your pouch. Do not carry a traveler's bag, or an extra tunic, or sandals, or walking-stake: workers deserve their living.

"When you come to a town or a village, look for a worthy person and stay there until you leave.

"As you enter the house, salute it peace. If the people in the house deserve it, your peace will be on them; if they do not deserve it, your blessing will come back to you."

Commentary:

The Lord's mercy preserves in sharing with us His abundant blessings and favors. All that we have and all that we are come from the Lord's mercy and favor.

Blessing received from the Lord are not meant to be hoarded but to be shared. Generosity is a virtue especially fitting those who follow the Lord. Jesus teaches us that it is far better to give than to receive. Without cost we have received, without cost we are to give. May we always recognize all the blessings God bestows without a desire to have that same blessing withheld from others.

UK donates anti-visa fraud gadgets to NBI

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN MANILA RECENTLY turned over to the National Bureau of Investigation new equipment to prevent visa misrepresentation.

The gadgets, which include computers, mobile phones, printers and scanners, were received by NBI Director Nestor Mantaring as part of a partnership between the NBI and the British government to combat terrorism and document falsification.

Short-term start: In the partnership to run 2007, more than 40 scanners have been made involving document forgery and syndicates victimizing innocent people wanting to visit the UK, the Embassy said.

"This donation is a symbol of our commitment to help Philippine authorities raise their capabilities to deal with fraud. It is in line with the British government's global efforts to secure its borders and integrity of people who travel to the United Kingdom from around the world," said British Ambassador Peter Bebbington.

"The UK has absolutely zero tolerance for fraud. Just this month, Britain has put in place some new laws that will enforce an automatic 10-year ban against people who try to enter the country by using false documents or deception," he added.

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ARROW

RP to send 100 more PNP men to Darfur

THE PHILIPPINES has committed an additional 100 police officers to the United Nations-led peacekeeping operations in the troubled Darfur region of Sudan, according to Ambassador Hilario Davide Jr., Philippine permanent representative to the UN in New York.

In his report to Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto G. Romulo, Davide said he had already informed the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) of Manila's intention to join efforts to stabilize the war-torn region.

Police (PNP) to augment the UN African Union Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID).

He said the deployment of the latest batch of Filipino peacekeepers underscored the Philippine government's commitment to help find a solution to the humanitarian crisis in Darfur.

He also said that the Philippine participation in UN-AMID, which is rated to be the biggest peacekeeping operations ever mounted by the UN, will bolster the standing of the Philippines as one of the largest, if not the largest, provider of multilateral police officers in UN peacekeeping operations.

As of end of April 2008, UN statistics show that PNP officers account for 274 of the 627 Filipino peacekeepers deployed in various UN mission areas abroad. The 100 officers are on top of the 42 officers who were deployed to Darfur earlier this year.

Davide said the Philippine contribution was in response to the request made by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon during his meeting with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo during the 62nd UN General Assembly in September. Cynthia D. Balana

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At KIA Distributors Convention in Beijing, China

CAC IS TOPS IN THE KIA ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

Columbian Autocar Corporation (CAC), manufacturer and distributor of Kia in the Philippines, bested 16 other countries in the Asia Pacific region to win the 2008 Kia Distributor of the Year Award.

The award was presented to Felix J. Mabilog, Jr. (CAC president and CEO), by H.K Lee, senior vice-president and CMO of Kia Motors, at the opening highlight of the 2008 Kia Global Distributors Convention held at the China World Hotel in Beijing, People's Republic of China May 19-21, 2008. Some 224 delegates representing 84 countries were in attendance, underscoring the global character and breadth of the Kia distribution network.

The distributor cited Columbian Autocar Corporation's performance of the highest degree and best overall sales performance in the Asia Pacific region. "It capped more than a decade of CAC's steady and continuous growth characterized by aggressive expansion of its distributorship network and swelling sales performance.

The Philippine distributor joined five other awardees from North and South America, Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

CAC president Felix J. Mabilog, Jr. (pictured) acknowledged Mr. Jose Ch. Alvarez, founder and chairman of Columbian Autocar Corporation, whose vision has propelled the company to where it is today. He also lauded the men and women of Columbian who had contributed unstintingly to the pursuit of promoting the Kia brand. Mabilog especially cited the Kia national distributorship network which has been instrumental in increasing the Kia ownership base all over the Philippines.

Jose Ch. Alvarez
Founder and Chairman
Columbian Autocar Corporation

The award is especially significant since the Kia brand is fast becoming a household name in the Philippine automotive industry. The locally distributed Kia Sorento, Sportage, Carnival, Carens, Rio, Picanto and K2700, are outpacing their competitors in performance and sales, contributing to the surge of Kia's slogan " The Power to Surprise".

"The global distributors convention is an annual Kia event that charts the Korean automotive company's roadmap for the future. Kia Motors chairman Myung Kun Chung, along with his son Kiwan Chung, president of Kia Motors, summed up "Vision 2010", the theme of this year's meeting, as the continuing pursuit of the Hyundai Kia Group's Management philosophy which is " Innovation for Humanity, " devoted in this goal to the development of competitive vehicles that satisfy local tastes while proposing to bring to market ever- friendly vehicles in the very near future. Chairman Chung stressed that Kia is trying to fulfill its role " as a responsible automaker that plays its part in protecting the environment."

In a preview to this vision of Kia for 2010, Kia unveiled brand new products which will hit markets worldwide in 2008 and 2009 to the delight of the delegates in the Beijing convention. Underscoring the importance placed by Kia in ensuring its global competitiveness in the presence of its senior executive vice-president and chief design officer, Peter Schreyer. It was Schreyer's handiwork that is creating a new design philosophy for one of the most dynamic car companies in the world today. Schreyer's design of the Audi TT and new Volkswagen Beetle are considered automotive icons of the 21st century.

As part of the Hyundai-Kia Automotive Group, Kia aims to become the fifth largest automaker in the world by 2010. Kia Motors produces more than 1.3 million vehicles a year that are produced in 14 manufacturing and assembly operations in eight countries and which are then sold and serviced through a network of distributors and dealers covering 165 countries.

Kia Motors President Eveson Chung congratulates CAC President Mabilog during the welcome dinner for Kia Global Distributors Convention.

CAC President Mabilog (right) with Peter Schreyer, senior executive vice-president and chief design officer of Kia Motors. Schreyer is the creative energy behind the 'revolutionary design' of Kia cars since 2006.

KIA
KIA MOTORS
The Power to Surprise™
SPORTAGE with CRDi DIESEL ENGINE
CARENS with CRDi DIESEL ENGINE
CARNIVAL with CRDi DIESEL ENGINE

Columbian Autocar Corporation (CAC) president and chief operating officer (COO) **Felix J. Mabilog, Jr.** receives the Distributors of the Year in Asia Pacific Region trophy from **H.K. Lee**, senior vice president and COO of Kia Motors during the 2008 Kia Global Distributors Convention held in Beijing, China recently.

Beijing's Great Hall of the People was the fitting venue for the welcome dinner tendered by Kia Motors to the more than 224 delegates from 84 countries who converged in China for the Kia Global Distributors' Convention.

COLUMBIAN AUTOCAR CORPORATION

AWARDED

KIA DISTRIBUTOR OF THE YEAR

AT THE

2008 KIA GLOBAL DISTRIBUTORS CONVENTION

BEIJING, CHINA

For professionalism of the highest degree and best overall sales performance in the Asia and Pacific Region.

2700 SORENTO CRDi DIESEL ENGINE picanto Rio

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
Vol. 23 No. 187
OPINION

Last extension

LET US DIRECT OUR ATTENTION, YET AGAIN, TO the practical details of any extension of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. Passage of any measure that will allow the Department of Agrarian Reform to complete the redistribution of agricultural land—with or without reforms in the landmark law—will depend not on lofty philosophical arguments but on President Macapagal-Arroyo's exercise of political will.

EDITORIAL

The politics of extension cannot but be the extension of the art of the possible.

As it is, it looks highly unlikely that even House Bill 4077, the substitute bill certified urgent by the President and approved on committee level, will pass before the first session of the 14th Congress adjourns for the last time on Friday.

For one thing, a solid minority of congressmen, many of them associated with landowners or themselves landed, have succeeded in consolidating resistance to any extension of CARP. For another, HB 4077 is an extension-and-reform bill; that is to say, it seeks to plug the loopholes that undermined the original law. It will be difficult enough to get a majority of congressmen to sign on to an extension of the old law; how much more so one that comes with substantial reforms attached?

Not least, the President has failed to make her presence felt, not on the issue, but on the bill. Even the certification of urgency came late in the day, a delay that has been interpreted favorably by those opposed to extension. As Nueva Ecija Rep. Eduardo Joson pointed out, passage of the bill on second and third readings this week will happen only if President Arroyo "cracks the whip" on administration congressmen.

We do not see that happening.

Consider: The rice emergency gave her an excellent opportunity to sell extension to both Congress and the public; the negative impact of land conversion on food security would have strengthened her hand. But she let the opportunity pass.

It may be that Mrs Arroyo is torn between her obligation to her father's legacy (Gumlaki Macapagal was the first president to attempt land reform) and his widely sympathetic (her husband belongs to a family with at least three major landholdings still undistributed).

In a privileges speech last April, Alibatuan party-list Rep. Rizal Buenaventura Bantiquel ruefully noted one possible reason for Ms Arroyo's lack of political will in implementing CARP. "The President still eight years ago that the 1,000-hectare Arroyo land would be put under CARP like any CARP about to expire in less than 90 days, there are at six of the hacienda included in the Arroyo lands are still undistributed. Worse, they have been converted or subdivided to evade CARP: Hacienda Bacan was converted to agro-industrial use for the production of ethanol; Hacienda Guimbe was subdivided and titled to several corporations, individuals and foundations; and Hacienda Barahan was subdivided into parcels of five-hectares each, a sly if not silly attempt to evade the law."

The President will not look for crinies who will snuff or even the possibility of a conflicted, tormented leader. In this view, she will act only according to her own interest. If extension will allow her to continue to dominate the political landscape until at least 2010 and to enjoy eternal immunity after, we will have a new law extending CARP in our hands. If it doesn't, we won't.

But it is also possible to credit her with a genuine interest in agrarian reform, perhaps learned while growing up in Malolos-bing. This view helps make sense of her (belated but beneficial) involvement to the settlement of the Sumilao farmers' dispute. In other words, it is possible to argue that she actually wanted the settlement to happen.

Unfortunately for the cause of agrarian reform, President Arroyo's role in settling the Sumilao issue was essentially passive. She did not stand in the way of a settlement, no small thing, considering the subaltern's aggressive Executive can wreak. But not enough either. Crucially, she waited for someone else—to the person of San Miguel Corp. president Ramon Ang—to find a way to get things done.

In the extension of the CARP law, however, there is no "someone else." It is the President herself who must make things happen.

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Another power monopoly emerging in south

THE FOREIGN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE got what was coming to them—a merger backing from senators—for having the cheek to tell President Macapagal-Arroyo not to amend the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira). The senators felt insulted that the foreign businessmen would dare tell the highest executive and officers of the country but also trying to dictate to the Chief Executive when it is Congress that has the authority to amend or not the Epira.

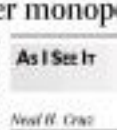
The businessmen did not want the Epira amended because the foreign-owned power generators, the independent power producers (IPPs), never had it so good in their contracts with the Philippine government and the local power distributors. Not only does the government guarantee the payment of their loans, the power rates are among the highest in the world.

Also, the businessmen did not want to lose the guarantees that they would be paid for the power contracted even when that power is not used or ever generated. And who is going to pay for that? Who else but us, the consumers.

But the Epira must be amended. For it is the original sin that has made our power rates the highest in Asia. Epira's failures is that most ownership (power distribution like Meralco also owning power generation like First Gen and Hedcor) made Epira useless.

Epira was conceived to make competition in the electricity power industry push consumer rates down. Even, ownership was banned in the original draft of the bill, but vested interests lobbied members of Congress so that the ban was removed. So there is no more competition in buying power from many generators. As we have seen, the big distribution companies have bought their power from their companies in rates high or than the prevailing market rates, then passed on the higher rates to their consumers.

Epira also mandates the government-owned National Power Corp. to privatize its power plants, which are relatively cheap, thereby ensuring the generators. But it is the distributors who are buying up most of the Napocor plants.



As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

to what will happen is that big distributors like Meralco and the Aboitizes of the Visayas will end up having monopolies of the electric industry, owning both the distribution and power companies.

The Lopez group, which owns Meralco, wants to control all the Napocor power assets. It wanted the 600mw CBK pump hydro complex, the 500mw Masinloc coal plant, the 1000mw Calaca coal plant, and the 1,000mw Sucat power complex. It already has the 1,300mw Sta. Rita gas plants and planning a 300mw "San Gabriel" expansion, 200 mw of hydro assets, the 200mw Bauang diesel plant, and the coveted PNOC-EDC geothermal assets. Only the equally aggressive new players thwarted the Lopez group's designs on Masinloc, Calaca, Sucat, and Bauang.

Such grand ambitions are possible only because the Lopez family does control Meralco, the largest market for generated power at 5,000mw (twice bigger than all the remaining distribution companies in the country combined. Whenever Gaston of 2222 is right, the franchise for Metro Manila and environs should be divided in several distribution—like the franchises to water distribution—so that we will not have a giant monopoly. Without a barrier cross-ownership, the almost-certain losing subpoenaed to issue by Meralco will be minimized—since it requires more generation.

In the south, the Aboitizes, who control the second and third largest distribution franchises in the country—those in Cebu and Davao—want to borrow from the Lopez monopoly playbook. They already own the port business in Davao, mostly in cargo shippers in Davao, they now want to also take advantage of their hold on the power market, as the controllers of the 300mw Visayan Electric Co. in Cebu and the 280mw Davao Light and Power in Davao. And, they now want to be the principal power generators.

The Aboitizes in Cebu are now planning to build a 200mw coal-fired project in partnership with the Global Business Power of the Shenzhouk group after the Korean Electric Power bailed at a requested demand of 22 percent in low equity in exchange for a power supply contract. (The Aquinos got 60 percent of Hedi Zac using PPA charges.) The ensuing conflict of interest in Cebu and Davao is going against the tide of consumer backlash in Metro Manila.

That is now Cebu's dilemma. The conflict of interest that arises outweighs fringe road gas. But the Aboitizes are close to the First Family, enjoying a friendship ripe to subsidized by its dependability and loyalty and support to controversial initiatives (Hacienda with the Lopezes. The Lopez family get rich exploiting the arises outweighs loophole even to the clear betrayal of the consumers. Why should not GMA allow the Aboitizes the same opportunity? After all, they are main bond. Maybe, they will not abuse the Cebuanos and Davaoenos with the franchises than Metro Manilans are being subjected to.

Cebuano consumers enjoy low power rates for three reasons: Napocor sells at a low P2.36 per kWh in the Visayas compared to P4 in Luzon. Second, subsidies for the Visayas by about P0.13 per kWh, and the distribution charge of the Visayas Electric is only P1.56/kWh, compared to Meralco's P2.03/kWh. The proposed coal power projects of Lopez (300mw), DMCI in Iloilo (330 mw), and the 90-mw San Miguel-Kepco project in Mindanao will not lower rates. All need a rate of P4.00/kWh to be feasible.

Whose project will eventually get built? I bet on the guy who controls the distribution market—and that is the Aboitizes, who will create another giant monopoly in the south.

Consumers have to be protected from the emerging power monopoly that the flawed Epira allows, lamenta Epira.

A great and terrible harm

THE NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALISTS IN the Philippines and the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists have said their piece. The conviction of Nides Cadiz Ofilveros, says Bob Dietz, Asian coordinator of the latter, is undemocratic, "it is high time for ... the Philippines to remove the libel laws that continue to threaten journalists by discriminating libel." The NUJP says pretty much the same thing: Ofilveros' conviction highlights "the urgency of ... improving our antiquated libel law."

I can only add my own voice to their protest and contribute a few more things in defense of it.

First off, what harm has Ofilveros done? Arthur Villarosa, the plaintiff in the case, says her articles alleging that his late father, also called "The Don," consumed "illegal and reprehensible acts" while allegedly in Marcos' employ deeply hurtful. They maligned them and brought their office into disrepute. Villarosa unconvinces that Ofilveros did this out of malice.

Not at all.

In fact what has deeply harmed Villarosa and company and brought their office into disrepute is their libel suit itself. In the very least that is so in the superficial sense that it reminds the world, or appears those who have not heard of it, of their possible complicity in a deal at Hill of Justice in the 1980s. It's like the Ilocos Norte governor Imee Marcos-Manotoc getting deeply hurtful. They maligned them and brought their office into disrepute. Villarosa unconvinces that Ofilveros did this out of malice.

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As it stands, Ofilveros' series performs a public service. It has put down in print something that formerly existed only in not inaccurate, blogs, and talks in coffee houses. I won't add hearsthouse because the affairs of the Villarosas of the world do not belong in the reckoning of their patrons. The talk has been there for some time. "The Don" was the spider at the center of the web known as the

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

Pinoys know. The series plucks the issue from the realm of rumor and throws it into the realm of discourse, where it can be held up for public scrutiny. Was Ofilveros wrong about her specific allegations?

Maybe yes, maybe no. But there's the rub. The Don does not look for the heroin and proceed to convict a fault where they are one. They would easily have acted their side through publicity in newspapers—which admittedly is controlled by higher circulation/viewership and better reputation for objectivity. Or if they wanted to nothing and save... and show they did not take hundreds of millions from the dead, even if it's been years or a long time ago that the issues prescribed, they would have simply asked Ofilveros could always write letters to the editor or hire TV with their issue articulate representatives. This was exactly what I said when Erap prosecuted the Manila Times into closing down and mounted an ad campaign against the business in 1999 presumably because they were writing his bad. And—we thought we couldn't do that better than he. Even granting that he had a legitimate grievance, his response was patently wrong.

If you have. What does a libel suit do? It instigates the accused even more. The suit thereby proves to the public mind, at least, if not the courts, that the Villarosas have something to hide. Indeed, its successful prosecution merely proves to the public mind, because of the courts, that the Press truly possesses the testimonies Ofilveros alleges. In the court of public opinion, which is the only forum that matters in this country, Ofilveros' conviction does not make The Nides innocent, it makes it guilty.

Ofilveros herself says her accusers have not proven malice, a fundamental criterion of libel. That is true, the judge—asserting he is impartial—probably mistaking drunkenness for malice. I guess shame is not Ofilveros' strongest suit. I grant she won't win many medals in a contest on how to win friends and influence people. That's not malice, though, than it just insufficiently nice. Which brings me to suspect that the malice here see lie on the part of the accused but on the part of the accuser. Maybe they mean to throw her to the wolves on the supposition that there won't be a wolf to save her?

Well, that supposition won't be realized. The case doesn't just affect the lives of Ofilveros and Villarosa, it affects the lives of all journalists and their subjects. The whole media community can only be expected to rise up in arms over this, as signaled by the first editorial by the NUJP and CPJ. By itself the conviction of Ofilveros augurs badly for press freedom. Taken in conjunction with the arrest warrant issued by Raul Gonzalez on Dante Ang, it augurs badly for democracy itself. Both Ofilveros and Ang are well-known critics of government. Both were hounded for exposing corruption in government. One of them being singled out for prosecution is already more than an accident. The two of them being so is less than a month is a veritable pattern. Government—and its allies—mean to silence critics.

But I suggesting that people should be journalists when they are wrongly accused by journalists? Not at all. I've said this before and I say it again: I personally would like to see an ombudsman body formed by the journalist community to take up complaints against abusive members. That is to say people who abuse the media virtue, completely unlike Villarosa, a poor and weak and has no means to fight back. That is where the real abuse happens. But making libel a criminal offense punishable by jail doesn't make things better, it makes it worse. It's like using a sledgehammer to crack peanuts.

The NUJP and CPJ are right—that has no place in a democratic society. But then who says this country is democratic?

Beware of the 'Surge'

ANALYSIS

Armando Doronila

THE BIGGEST THREAT TO POLITICAL STABILITY in the Philippines in the near six months to the rising inflation affecting the prices of oil, commodities and consumer services.

Businessman Raul Concepcion has warned that the prices of basic commodities are expected to post the biggest increase this month, driven by biological new-wheels oil. Unit 7 touched a record high of $140.00 a barrel from $135 a barrel two weeks ago. The investment bank Goldman Sachs forecasts an average price of $141 this month quarter, with prices rising to $200 a barrel by 2008.

According to a special business report, oil industry executives in the Philippines said that a crude price of $135 a barrel would drive up the price of gasoline to P65 a liter and the oil deficit to P68.4 bn. A $1-a-barrel increase in international crude prices translates to an increase of about $2 billion in the country's oil import bill. Pump prices of gasoline are expected to rise to about P68 a liter and diesel at about P55 a liter. This fuels on make the ground of uneven—from petrol consumers, transport operators and workers, public transport commuters—with consequences that have a flare-up.

Historically, the transport sector is the most vulnerable area for unrest, often sparked by commuter strikes, affecting other sectors of productive activity. Augusto Santos, director general of the National Economic and Development Authority, said that in the worst case scenario of $200 a barrel oil, this would mean a substantial cut in economic growth. The estimated impact would be over-six points because inflation and each down the great domestic product. He said, When the price of oil hits $200 a barrel, the government's goals to achieve good net growth range of 6.5 to 7 percent is no longer attainable. A slowdown of the economy has eroded the thin layer of President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration's legitimacy.

The first news about inflation is coming from the banking sector. The Bank of the Philippine Islands predicts that inflation in June would break into the double-digit barrier for the first time since 1998. A BPI study of June's projected a 10.2 per cent year-on-year increase in consumer prices in June, assuming that crude oil would raise below $130 a barrel and that the prices remain steady.

This report came as the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported that food and energy prices contributed to rise in May at 9.6 percent, pushing inflation to its highest level since January 1998 when the index was 10.3 percent. Prices of food, meanwhile, as measured in CREBC, said, "Unless oil falls dramatically, the inflation path will be higher in the Philippines. Inflation is driven not just by oil but food, primarily, and other items such as services as reflected by core inflation is 6.2 per cent.

Cayetano Paderanga, an economist in the University of the Philippines, points out the psychological impact of double-digit inflation: "You get only it in the figures for the first. Second that first, the psychological impact of the people—changes are much more difficult to control their expectations of price increase." When economic growth slows, but inflation stays high, he said, those poor workers were hit proportionately.

The spiraling prices of food and fuel have driven inflation into just the safety zone of social stability. Metaphorically speaking, fuel prices, in particular, have poured oil on fire and. Only a few weeks ago, queues started to building up outlets of drugs, government-subsidized rice-retail starting in seven points of the country by the poor protesting against the rise of food prices. Tensions on the rise and a repeated figure among all sectors confronted by high-profile, the smallest report is assured through e-mail and. Attempts has already been released. A newspaper report says a number of P30 million has been demanded for the MRT-CBD corporation.

From what I gather, Dalton and her team had gone to Iloilo upon Gloriapro's invitation, but on their way to consulting with some Abu Sayyaf leaders, their vehicle was blocked by armed men and they were taken to the mountains hostage.

In connection, armed soldier Col Mindanao Region Command appointed to the police and military to work out the release of the foreign victims ... and also on any religious leaders from Jolo, Basilan and Muslim Isles to coastal whatever possible support."

Gloriapro, the newcomer said, is a "credible and well-respected leader from Jolo and a leading peace advocate ... a dedication of peace-making, good governance and relief and rehabilitation efforts in the conflict-affected areas of Mindanao."

"So, from the MNLF, best groups for my are active in Jolo and in Port Area groups," they said, which may explain why Cia remained safe and her safety safety is key. Let's hope the professor's influence will ensure the continued's safety.

PUBLIC is that Cia, an intrepid reporter who was recognized by "ICHAT" for her television work, was told not to pursue the story she is currently working on. But knowing her commitment to news work, I'm sure she weighed her options carefully before resuming in Sulu.

Cia may have to lament for promoting government's genocide that she was complicit in the Manila Peninsula by declaring that if the had known it was the story behind her, she would not have worn high heels to the interview. But she is, more than anything else, brave and energetic. Hardworking and always hot to pursue of stories, the journalism are always cold than we more it needs our lives, but we're always compelled to push the envelope while keeping our lives ensured. We're keeping our fingers, knees and eyes crossed for you, Cia.

Rabies law

PEDRO ALAGOT GONZALES II REPUBLIC ACT 9482, which was approved by Congress last February and signed into law by President Macapagal-Arroyo, thanking the law has got me thinking about how we've made new rules, change the process and why our needed this new law.

When I was in elementary school more than 30 years ago, my professors always reminded us that the Philippines had the highest death rate in the region for rabies. Later, when I entered public health, I learned of other diseases that are endemic in the Philippines that had for example, had the one of the highest tuberculosis incidence rate just in the region but in the world.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

Through the years, we've managed to shed off some of those dishonorable distinctions, but the high death rate from rabies has remained, even as other countries became rabies-free, or now have just occasional rare report of one case, usually from wildlife. In the Philippines, we would have one rabid dog going on a rampage, biting humans as well as other dogs to create an outbreak. Sometimes there'd be an outbreak after humans would butcher and eat a rabid dog.

The stories of "survivors," saved by garlic or snake juice, using outdoor barks or animal bones) are all legends: if you have "survived" a dog bite, it was because the dog was not rabid in the first place. The rabies virus allows us no immunity, only victim dies from horrible death.

Rabies reminded me that has never been limited rather to health education. Television shows have featured rabies victims many times, showing how they suffer and yet, television remains complacent about the risks from rabies—pet dogs are left unvaccinated and roaming the streets.

Even in my student days, we already had awareness-week rabies; we would visit the provincial and offer free vaccinations. People would line up and watch us, and sometimes a mob and tentacle their own "pets." The vaccination campaigns became a form of weekend entertainment, a dog rabies of sorts as we chased after the dogs, with the residents cheering us on and cracking jokes like "Can you vaccinate my rabid butchered long-suffering fiancé?"

We used to have a division of our own—rabies were rabid, with those long poles that trailed like a noose—connecting to harness from those a wire—ends a loop at the end. The trick was to get the loop over the dog's muzzle and to pull on a wire so a grasp is. Into then ran to the dog, arrested in terror, and then grabbed the needle. At the end of the day, we would collapse like mosquito-eating in front-hooks, expecting our bites wounds, scratches, bruises, abrasions. Some bites being snapped—a deeper wounds from grasping bruises, even needle jabs. We ourselves were actually all vaccinated against rabies—it was expensive, but necessary as occupational hazard.

My MD-PhD professor for a medical agency approach to rabies control. The Department of Agriculture (previously through the Bureau of Animal Industry) should be in charge providing, among other measures, free anti-rabies vaccinations of dogs, creating an animal rabies surveillance system, strengthening education and community research.

The Department of Health takes care of the humans, providing treatment for bite victims, providing vaccinations to veterinarians, laboratory staff and other people such a high risk of exposure to the rabies virus, and again developing a surveillance system for humans.

Like the laws provision for the Department of Education to strengthen rabies education in the school health curriculum and to assist in mass vaccination campaigns of dogs. We need to make sure the teachers are educated first about what exactly happens to rabies. The most important message is that the dog bite victim must not panic, but must go to the hospital as soon as possible, it should not be killed, but placed under observation for 10 to 14 days. The new law also requires that the bite be reported to authorities.

Second important message: there is no cure for rabies. The most one is can question that there should be stringent abuse would, presumably abuse or mistreatment.

The law also requires the Department of the Interior to create "responsible pet ownership," which I hope will include education about the Animal Welfare Act and prevention of cruelty to animals.

Finally, the local government units are supposed to ensure all dogs are properly maintained, registered and issued an identification tag. There are all kinds of fines in the new law. The owners who refuse to get a leash on their dogs when they are brought out of the home will be fined P500. Owners of unregistered dogs will be fined P2,000, and if the dog bites someone, they have to pay for the costs of vaccinating the human victim(s). Pet owners who refuse to have their dog placed under observation after it bites someone will be fined P10,000. A leash accident can endure who refuses to have their dog euthanized, and do not tolerate the willful neglect of someone bitten by their dog will be fined P50,000.

Curiously there is a fine of P1,000 and imprisonment of one to four years for any person found guilty of trading dog meat, a chairperson of the Animal Welfare Act unless here, the legislation is to prevent the sale of meat from dogs that had died of rabies.

Unregistered dogs will be impounded and owners will have to pay P600 to P1,000 to get their pets back. Unclaimed, dogs will be euthanized. I'm particularly concerned about this point, having seen our own, and heard of other owners with similar cases, where stray dogs were rounded up and became to be put to their cases. In a few of these cases, supposedly unclaimed to be promoted. (The women said they would never return to that island, and were wondering if they wanted to come back to the Philippines at all.) The new law explicitly states that the Animal Welfare Act must be observed.

There are other important provisions to the law, including provisions for impounding and quarantining purchased of dogs, which is essential if we want to control rabies. There are just necessary dogs roaming around—and reproducing.

The new law is supposed to be implemented through a budget of P100 million, to come from the budgets of the health, agriculture, local government and education departments. Perhaps I am then among Pinoy's brainwashing media, we have to be vigilant, but I'm optimistic. In particular's reasons, page C11 are only hope the money will be made available so the law can be implemented.

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The National Association of Philippine Newspapers

Good money after bad

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

SENIOR BAG THE PURSUIT "GOOD MONEY AFTER bad" been as applicable as in the Arroyo-Macapagal Arroyo is giving out to "shelter" consumers of lifestyles, perhaps as a way of cushioning the blow in the Lagmen where she failed to win the hearts and minds of the people in the long run.

Winston Garcia of the Government Service Insurance System.

The amount we're talking about here is seeming to execute at: P3 billion to save a million voters from the effects of the rise in prices already being subsidized. But broken down to the individual household level, the amount is a paltry P900, which can barely get by, say, a total for a family of five in a hundred days. Or, if we're talking of bills, the P900 will only serve a month's bill for families who are already the lowest users of fifteen cubic meters.

I do agree that even P900 for the poorest of our poor families can go a long way—but not long enough. Certainly, it won't bring them out from under the poverty line. At best, it is a temporary measure that offers a little breathing room. Indeed, the real beneficiaries of the fuel price subsidy are those in the profession in the Palace who is set to take the anticipated wave of goodwill generated by her "generosity."

But when the recipients may not realize it that their pockets are being unveiled in their own tax, since the debt will be sourced from public funds, and expropriate from most government income sources, from indirect taxes, those taxes imposed on our consumption items, from surcharges to existing oil to current models.

What struck me when I first heard the news was that he debt was another "last-ditch solution" to a problem, structural problem. Certainly, the energy crisis is not the first time that the country has had to be nearly robbed by month throwing money at it. And this is money that could have been used to a more strategic solution—one could allow for long-term solutions to the problems of poverty.

ALREADY, the Department of Social Work and Development has announced guidelines on how this "lifeline" more could assess the P900 to poor households. Among the criteria are that the household must be registered with the National Statistical Coordination Board's National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction, and that it must be a household with a member who is a senior citizen, a person with disability, a solo parent, a pregnant woman, or a child under five years old.

Why these criteria? Why not simply those who are registered with the Meralco? Why not those who are registered with the Meralco? Why not those who are registered with the Meralco? Why not

Small landowners out of CARP

LETTERS

CONGRESS SHOULD LET THE Comprehensive Land Reform Law (CARP) lapse in June 2008 after 20 years of operation.

The Oversight Committee of Congress should now make a detailed review of the results of the implementation of this law. There should be full accounting of the billions of pesos spent to implement this law. There should be a clear answer to the following questions: "Has this law contributed to the present rice crisis? Has this law accelerated the conversion of rice lands into industrialization? Were the beneficiaries able to repay their loans? Did they sell their acquired lands to developers? Did they embrace the land and create a new generation of tenants? Have the landowners been fully and properly paid for their expropriated lands?

The government must now look for a more efficient means of increasing rice production rather than seek the extension of the failed CARP law. Large bicameral should not be broken into smaller ones which become inefficient. Rather, the government must encourage the conversion of these vast tracts of land into more efficient agricultural corporations for increased production of rice and other food crops. This is more in consonance with the economy of scale. Among even the tenants become shareholders of the corporation that takes over the land they work on. They become agricultural workers and stockholders at the same time. Government supervision, however, is extremely necessary so that workers' rights are protected as provided for in the Labor Code.

The main short CARP extension has not even taken into account the complaints of the small landowners, those holding five hectares or less which are also covered by CARP. These lands were usually bought by their ancestors at a price. The CARP law has given the tenants a lot of leverage to grab these lands also because provisions of the CARP law are stacked up against the small landowners. Therefore, some senators, congressmen and religious groups should take this issue into account before trying to give away lands that do not belong to them.

—C. DUREMDES BAÑA,
Cubao, Quezon City

HLURB accused of not doing job

WE BELIEVE, OURS IS NOT AN isolated case. Millions of unemployed for buyers have been victimized by shrinking developers. Meanwhile, our authorities have deliberately kept a blind eye to our plight. Worse, the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB), which by law is tasked to protect lot buyers and to regulate the industry is by and for the most inept and treacherous agency we have come across.

Consider these facts: After many months of violations, cease and desist orders issued against our developer, it continues to operate with impunity. While we are suffering due to the lack of a drainage system, substandard piping system that have caused huge systemic loss (45 percent), lack of secondary lines, and inadequate public and playground, the HLURB continues to hold by granting our developer more permits, thus allowing the developer to victimize more families.

Out of frustration, we sought the help of Rep. Rodolfo Valeros (a Oriental Mindoro who supported us quickly) but the voice of a member of the House of Representative, it seems, is no match for the wealth and influence of a privileged few.

—ARDEN BTI,
president, Greatview Homeowners Association, Cogeo, Antipolo City

JDV's NBN testimony to test his patriotism

ONE OF THE FACTORS THAT HINDERED the effectiveness of government officials in rooting out corruption and improving the quality of governance is the moral paralysis of many of them. Self-aggrandizement, personal and political preservation have taken utmost priority in their decision — and lives.

While election campaign speeches boast of their willingness to risk personal/family comfort and even life if only to serve the people, a majority of these wealthy scions under power seat and cower their fears with excuses and then simply opt to protect their personal interests only or base favorable that usually, ultimately end up to a compromise or in a move by the administration to buy off the opposition parties' members, or simply in complete silence. I pray that former Speaker Jose de Venecia will not be of the same weak fiber.

The visionary regrets that he rose from the ashes of his loss of the speakership and take up the cudgels for truth. If there was distrust by his bosom pockey to the golf game with ZTE officials, then he must declare so, without keeping everyone in "suspense" with statements that in some ways ignite suspicion because they are framed to words like "in the proper forum," "in the right time," "would bring the government down," or "but ...will talk."

On the other hand, if there is truth to the speculations that the golf game was part of a social activity meant to seal a secret deal, and that the former speaker had direct knowledge of how this deal was "cooked," there is his duty to walk his talk of patriotism, loyalty to the Constitution, fidelity to his constituents — to risk all, with the same degree of courage his son showed, and to contribute to the search for truth and justice as a key witness in a limited or total basis.

Obviously, he will have to risk getting implicated in the crime or receiving threats on his life. He can either pull through as a true hero or end up completely discredited as another cheap grandstand magician. It is therefore of primary importance for the congressman to be guided by principles, conscience, and patriotism, before he comes out with some revelations.

It is in an old hand to politics and government service that would lessen the cues of truth. There are a number of us waiting anxiously to see how far the congressman's commitment as a patriot can go.

—VICTOR MAÑALAC,
victormanalac@yahoo.com

Bad idea

I LIKE EVERYONE, PASIG LOWERS ELECTRICity rates. But removing the EVAT on systems losses is a bad idea simply because any and every business has losses due to events and/or pilferage.

And you, every consumer pays for that waste because if a business cannot recoup operational losses from its selling price then the business would either go bankrupt or will not be/come operational. It is therefore illogical to say businesses for waste then it increases the incentive for businesses to be wasteful.

While competition will help keep this to check in theory, the reality is this will provide a way to which businesses can evade their burden to avoid taxes. It would be far better to lower or eliminate taxes.

—RAMIE ESA,
136 Rebel Loop,
Ayala Hillside,
Silliman, Quezon City

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Across the NATION

No results of Subic shabu probe yet

By Tonyets Crespo
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—NOTHING FINAL HAS come out yet of the government's investigation of the P4 billion worth of shabu discovered in four bunches at the Subic Bay Freeport in Zambales last month.

"Wala pa (There is none yet)," retired Gen. Dionisio Santiago, chief of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, said on Tuesday when asked for updates on the investigation.

But the PDEA, he said, is not having a blank wall.

"We are getting a lot of information but we continue to check the veracity of them. We are carefully analyzing them because some leads may be just ploys to divert our attention," Santiago said in a phone interview.

"We are pursuing leads, no matter how small are these," he added.

He said investigators are cross-checking data as they trace the whereabouts of the suspect, Hedong "Patrick" Ang, the owner/CEO of Sim Ang Trading Co. Ltd. and its supplier, Jose Ang Sang.

Both men, as well as four incorporators of Ang's company and Jose's five investors, have been placed on the hold-departure list of the Bureau of Immigration since May 29.

The PDEA, which Santiago is also considering

Exec apologizes to OFWs for job absence in RP

BAGUIO CITY—A LOCAL OFW-aid set Saturday apologized to about 700 Cordillera migrant workers and their relatives for the city government's failure in providing them jobs.

Councilor Betty Lourdes Tabanda, chair of the council committee handling family affairs, women and children, issued the apology during the local celebration of National Migrant Workers Day, saying the government is keenly aware of the difficulties overseas workers face each day they leave the country to seek abroad.

Although credited for mobilizing the economy with their collective P34-billion remittances, Tabanda said migrant workers must benefit soon from new investment policies in Baguio to enforce the flight of workers.

She said the city government is reforming a policy that requires investors and manufacturers to reserve that 30 percent of their employees come from Baguio and the four Benguet towns that surround it.

"The officials] already frequent is dropping small and lucrative. Inside the Baguio City Economic Zone). We have even anyone we encounters there, and if we leave the employees to rot here Baguio, we ruin hell. That's how serious we are," Tabanda said.

The celebration was attended by delegates from Abra, Apayao, Mt. Province, Ifugao, Benguet and Baguio, who came in their traditional costumes.

Tabanda told them she had raised resolutions where she was asked to present an award to a Baguio community with the largest number of migrant workers.

Many OFWs in attendance said they returned home recently and were surprised to find their remittances were no longer enough to pay for increasing commodity prices.

Lidia Dawes, a delegate of the 30-member OFW Federation of Apayao, said she came home last year after 24 years as a maid in Singapore, who came in their traditional costumes.

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Apayao ranks fourth in the list of the country's poorest provinces, but Dawes said communities cope because they raise their own food, including rice.

"But it is the daily consumption which affects us. We can't always buy what we need today," she said.

"Where I got here is Hong Kong dollar [was equivalent to] P7.50. By the time I settled in, the exchange rate fell to P5.25 to a Hong Kong dollar. I know the price is weakening again, but with prices going up, it can only help us a little," Dawes said. Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

NEWSBRIEFS

■ BACOLOD CITY

Organic farming pushed

BACOLOD Occidental Gov. Isidro Zayco stressed the need to promote organic farming and the production of organic fertilizer due to the growing worldwide market for organic products.

Zayco, who attended an organic trade fair in Shanghai, said organic products have a very promising future worldwide, especially in North America and Europe.

Market experts from the Organic Monitor and the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements at the trade fair said sales volume of the international organic market reached $40 billion in 2007.

Carla P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas

Negros seen source of renewable energy

With 6 Negros Occidental and the rest of Western Visayas have a power shortage, the province has the capability of becoming the renewable energy capital of the country.

National Transmission Corp. president Arthur Aguilar on Saturday cited the capacity of Negros Occidental to produce energy from alternative sources.

The Northern Negros Geothermal Production Field in Kiburi City, Negros Occidental, has a capacity of 49 megawatts.

Negros Occidental sugar mills could produce 150 megawatts from bagasse and wood chips, he said.

Man faces rape for killing wife

A 60-year-old man faces rape murder charges after he allegedly shot and killed his wife in an alleged fit of jealousy in Bacolod City Saturday.

The police identified the suspect as Diego Caparida who allegedly shot dead his wife Judith at their house in Purok Saturn, Barangay Handumanan, Bacolod City, at about 2:30 p.m. Saturday.

SPO1 Homer Villanueva said 58-year-old Judith was declared dead on arrival at the Corazon Locsin Montelibano Memorial Regional Hospital.

Radio station dyHB reported that Diego, who is now in hiding, had been jealous after he allegedly received reports that another man had been seeing his wife.

Carla P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas

■ SAN JOSE, Antique

Jaro bishop favors clean, green electricity

CATHOLIC Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) and Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo on Thursday called on the government to focus on developing renewable sources of energy amid soaring prices of oil products and other fossil fuel.

"They should seriously consider renewable energy as a solution to the energy crisis and our country's dependence on imported fuel," Lagdameo said in an interview at the milestone of the launching of mini-hydro power plant projects in Antique.

Lagdameo said tapping local sources of energy like water, wind, solar and bagasse would free consumers from the control of oil and coal producers and safeguard the environment and human health.

Nestor P. Burgos Jr., Inquirer Visayas

■ AGUSAN DEL SUR

Tribal leader, brother shot dead

A TRIBAL leader and his younger brother were shot dead by still unidentified men Sunday in a remote village of Esperanza town.

Police said the suspects arrived in Barangay Otomica and immediately proceeded to the house of Jose "Datu Kalumayan" Pinto where they tied him, dragged him outside and shot him.

The victim's brother Alonso Pinto was later killed by the same suspects who went to his house and shot him. The victim was having dinner with his family when the suspects barged into his house.

Elvie V. Pangonilan, Inquirer Mindanao

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KAYA PALA NADEMANDA ANG NAPOCOR SA OMBUDSMAN...

ETO KAYA ANG DAHILAN KUNG BAKIT SOBRANG TAAS NG BENTA NG NAPOCOR SA WESM?

SERYOSO BA TALAGANG PABABAIN ANG PRESYO NG KURYENTE?

URCE OF FIGURES: NPC

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INQUIRER North

How Cordillera children are deprived of education

By Maurice Malanes
Kibungan, Benguet

AT THE SECOND CROW OF the rooster at daybreak, children of the sub-village of Ituwen in Benguet's upland town of Kibungan have to wake up, eat an early breakfast, and brace for an hour-long uphill climb to the nearest school in the poblacion (town center).

After classes are dismissed in the afternoon, they have to trek home before it gets dark.

There indeed—come rain, typhoon or cold season—is a fact of life not only in this landlocked town but elsewhere in the Cordillera. This is why Jimmy Jose, 27, a native of Ituwen village in neighboring Bakun town, and many of his former elementary classmates had to reach at least 8 years old before they can enter Grade 1.

"We had to grow older and be strong enough to be able to walk or (literally) climb our way to school," recalls Jose, a forestry graduate, who worked his way through high school and college. "This is no easy feat, especially in our community."

"Worse, those who were too weak and those not so determined to go to school eventually would drop out and forget school altogether," he says.

Kibungan is a fifth-class municipality (annual income: P7 million-P13 million).

'We had to grow older and be strong enough to walk or (literally) climb our way to school'

The Department of Education aims to encourage more children, particularly 6-year-olds, to enroll in Grade 1. It has campaigned to inform parents to enroll their children after noting a low turnout of 6-year-old enrollees for Grade 1 last school year.

Only more than a third or a million of the three million 6-year-old children nationwide enrolled in Grade 1 last year, says Bernie Wenceslao, DepEd Cordillera director. This was even much less more or less the same in the Cordillera, he says.

"The difficult access of children to the nearest school where they have to walk six to seven kilometers remains a main factor [for the low turnout of Grade 1 enrollees] in our region," says Pantacoan.

Ninety-five percent of the Cordillera terrain is mountainous. The only flat lands are in Tabuk City, Kalinga, Benguet, Abra, and the valley towns of La Trinidad, Benguet's capital.

"So I understand how these 6-year-olds with frail bodies can hardly withstand the rigors of hiking kilometers just to reach the nearest school," says Wenceslao.

The DepEd has programed some 6,000 6-year-olds in Grade 1 in the region this year or almost 3 percent of the 216,865 projected total enrollees for the elementary level.

TOP LOAD: Kalinga schoolchildren in their native costumes pack a jeepney to join the recent Uliden Festival in the capital city of Tabuk. (CONTRIBUTED)

Education for all

In seeking to help achieve in the country the United Nations goal to provide education for all by 2015, then Education adviser (the good will) continues to elude the country unless policy reforms are made.

An area that needs reforms is in building schools in remote communities.

Since the government seems to "economize" on values it allots for resolving positions, the DepEd cannot put up schools in communities with fewer than 50 students. This is especially true in the remote communities in the Cordillera have fewer than 30 6-year-olds in a given school year. These children are then forced to enroll in schools in the town or village centers, if they are fit enough.

Tamaraw is proposing a policy to establish schools even in communities with few enrollees. A teacher can be assigned to a community where even 15 children can use a barangay (village) hall as classroom, he says.

Children in remote communities can also go to school at the right age if they are provided boarding schools, he says. Boarding schools would allow them to go home only on weekends to get supplies for the week.

Tamaraw says Cordillera lawmakers may consider these policy reforms to help them craft education-related laws. "We, educators, would be happy if our legislators would support these suggested policy reforms," he says.

For secondary education, the Cordillera recorded almost 13-percent dropout rate last school year, one of the highest in the country. Famaraw cited economic difficulties, health problems and the absence of schools as among the major reasons.

If the trend continues, almost 12,800 of the projected 95,648 high school enrollees this year would drop out.

FAST FACTS

THE CORDILLERA still lacks teachers in both public elementary and high schools. This school year, it needs 86 elementary school teachers and 27 high school teachers, according to the Department of Education.

In Ifugao, 25 elementary school teachers are needed; Kalinga, 10; Benguet, 18; Mt. Province, 11; Apayao, 11; Baguio City, six; and Abra, two.

Benguet needs 14 secondary school teachers while Apayao needs 11; Kalinga, five, and Mt. Province, four. Abra and Baguio City have no projected need for new teachers until 2011.

Many schools still lack classrooms and armchairs or desks. For grade school, Kalinga needs 98 classrooms; Benguet, 64; Abra, 36; Baguio, 33; Mt. Province, 19; Ifugao, 14; and Apayao, 14.

For high school, Kalinga needs 73 classrooms; Mt. Province, 58; Baguio, 48; Benguet, 40; Apayao, 30; and Abra, 27.

Elementary schools in Benguet need 1,038 armchairs or desks. Kalinga needs 4,403 desks; Apayao, 1,980; Baguio, 1,298; Mt. Province, 1,180; Ifugao, 729; and Abra, 632.

Maurice Malanes

The classroom is the rice field

A FARM SCHOOL THAT WILL help farmers increase rice harvests and the economy become self-sufficient in rice will open in San Jose City in Nueva Ecija on June 15, the start of the wet planting season.

"It is like a salongot (last resort) soon for this is the Philippines and in Southeast Asia for the same way that the rice in General Bridge during the American Revolution was immediately heard around the world," said Emmanuel Libre Duarte, president of the Tabulo Green Coconut Farmers Association, one of the initiators of the Farmer Farm School.

It is a school without any building. Its classroom is the rice field of Serapio Nardal in San Jose. Its aim is simple: To launch the Rice Profit Protocol (RPP) developed by inventor Alfonso G. Payot and farmer Fernando Gabayo Jr.

The RPP will help the owners become self-sufficient in rice in two years and export it in three years, if the seeds are nutritious, the experiments would be extended by a season.

Can this be achieved? It risk dancing too much, like making a cat run fooled by water?

There is one way to find out. Launch the training program or school as the RPP can be scrutinized and monitored nationwide.

What is the RPP? Under the scheme, a minimal addition of inputs (slightly less than P2,000) and a slight modification in methodology will allow a dramatic increase in rice yields in irrigated fields.

Payot, one of the late Senate President Ed J. Payot, is a business administration graduate of the University of the Philippines and Wharton. He became a bank and insurance executive. But his passion since his collegiate years was rice and scientific research.

Gabayo is a marine engineering graduate. He served in an investment ship as an apprentice before earning full-time farming salary where even 15 children can use a barangay (village) hall as classroom, he says.

Children in remote communities can also go to school at the right age if they are provided boarding schools, he says. Boarding schools would allow them to go home only on weekends to get supplies for the week.

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Maurice Malanes

The Canon Wait Loss Program:

Lots of money for computers, none for rulers

From page A1

Omnilink Bio-medical Systems Inc., for the workshop at the Philippine Science Classroom at Ateneo de Manila.

From what they found under the lesson, the teachers were then asked to make a presentation—oral and graphic—using clay modelings or drawings—of their subject in a guessing game, giving three to five clues and drawing a lively interaction.

Aware that rulers are not permitted in public schools and that teachers are left in their own devices, organizers brought graphing paper to characterize what a millimeter looks like and drew illustrator the concepts of space and linear measurements.

Participants were judged according to creativity, attractiveness of presentation, the ability to stimulate curiosity and teamwork.

It was heart-melting to watch teachers gleefully peering at the microscope that enlarged 400 times specimens they had picked up along the riverbank.

Ideas from nature

Marina Baker, science education specialist of Nimbrod, says it was the first time that participating teachers from public elementary schools were able to use a compound microscope.

"Science gets ideas from nature," Baker says, explaining what the workshop was all about. In the respective public elementary schools where the teacher's trainees from, only blackboard and chalk were being utilized and kids were simply encouraged to memorize lessons.

Baker says teachers—and pupils—need to know the right smell, sound of things around them and be able to translate them to practical use.

She says, for example, that the color scheme used by Japanese car manufacturers was inspired by the eats of crystals in the wings of a butterfly and that the idea for the Velcro strap came from the hooks in the blade of a grass.

"If you stimulate the senses, you stimulate the brain," Baker says. The workshop, she says, stresses observing and communicating skills. She admits that time allotted for teacher training is not enough and the other problem is seeing to it that harnessed teachers use in their classes what they have learned in the workshop.

Underpaid, overworked

"They are underpaid and overworked," Baker says. "You have to pity them."

Baker, 59, who has a Ph.D. in science education, knows. She was a teacher once, just after she earned her bachelor's degree in education. She didn't like the monthly salary of P500 back in the 1960s, so she quit and joined the public works department as ecology researcher.

She did the field work on the environmental impact of the then proposed Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, a requirement for getting loans. She coined the project, pointing out that it was standing on a dormant volcano, but the Ferdinand Marcos dictatorship still went ahead with it. She decided to go back to teaching.

Because of the heavy workload, Baker says, teachers routinely are unable to inspire "hands-on" learning. She mentions the performances of teachers who had attended Nimrod workshops, but has no say of telling if what she sees in classrooms is all for show.

"Classrooms are recorded. Teachers have to buy the materials for teaching because the school cannot supply them. It is a tough job," Baker says.

She talks about a teacher who she says got $65 up of the low pay and long hours spent even after classes and decided to go to Hong Kong instead and become a house maid.

Cyber education project

One solution offered to improve the quality of education is the "open and distance learning," to the Cyber Education Project (CEP) made popular in the wake of the aborted $329-million National Broadband Network (NBN) project with China's ZTE Corp to wire the Internet-savvy electronically via the Internet.

The $400-million CEP, lined with Chinese firm Bilinghua Yinghua Normsoft Co. and Tsinghua University—aligned together with the NBN deal in April 2007—was a casualty of the scrapped broadband project.

WHAT THEY FOUND UNDER THE LENSES Fifty public school teachers in science and math attend a workshop on to introduce them to the world of microscopes, improvisation and a common-sense approach to teaching with a lack of learning materials like rulers.

President Macapagal-Arroyo suspended implementation of the CEP, along with other projects funded under official development assistance in a move to streamline ground rules because some donors required a supply contracts before a loan could be hammered out while in other cases it was the other way around.

Untold was the question of whether the public education system was up to the cyberspace challenge.

Last week, the Commission on Audit (COA) released a report of an investigation conducted last year that information and communications packages worth P667.95 million remained unused six years after they were delivered in public high schools and had become defective.

Among the reasons cited for the deteriorating state of the equipment were the lack of computer literate teachers, absence of computer rooms and no electricity in many areas.

'It multiplies excellence'

Alice A. Bañares, executive director of the National Council for Children's Television, believes that in spite of the concerns raised about the country's preparedness for the digital age, the CEP in fact could provide the solution to the multifaceted problems of teacher training and raising the quality of education.

"As a concept, it is good," she says. "It multiplies excellence."

Ms Arroyo has ordered a group headed by Fr. Bienvenido Nebres, president of Ateneo de Manila University, with leading him the CEP.

Nebres, in an interview Avril Lapus says that in all likelihood, Nebres will recommend that the program be implemented in stages, beginning with a pilot project to test the readiness of schools.

Lapus says the integration of information technology in basic education has been a long-standing program. He calls it a "work in progress," pointing to some public high schools that have been wired to the Internet.

Just do it

"It is going to facilitate basic teaching, teacher training and governance of 40,000 schools. Now you do it a new way, it takes you forever. You don't have feedback. You don't have real time. You cannot even disseminate your memos overnight," Lapus says.

He says the basic needs in schools, such as toilets and classrooms, will be supplied while the IT project is being scaled-up, step by step.

"The thing is, we just have to do it," Lapus says. With reports from Jocelyn R. Uy and Elisa Victoria, Inquirer Research

Filipinos relearn English from Peace Corps volunteers

From page A1

and their Filipino counterparts be with field.

The Peace Corps volunteers in the Philippines say they are simply serving as "resource" in the continued effort by the government, the private sector and international agencies to improve an ailing public education system. Specifically, they say they are devising ways with Filipino counterparts to improve the country's proficiency in English, its second language.

They are picking off, as it were, where the "Thomasites" left at the advent of half a century of American colonial rule. The Thomasites refer to the 500 American teachers who came to Manila aboard the transport ship Thomas in 1901 to establish the country's basic education system and teach Filipinos how to speak English.

"English proficiency is what the Philippines would like to maintain as an advantage. It is obviously that is a key point here in our fellowship program," says Diana Corpus, program and training officer Kevin Pellegrilly.

The agency which is supported by the US government, began here in 1961. Since then, more than 8,000 volunteers have been deployed across the country to work with local communities in various fields, including education, agroforestry, water sanitation, solid waste management and fisheries.

Currently, 132 volunteers are on a "rebranded" program that addresses areas of concern identified by the Philippine government, including English and information technology and development programs for disadvantaged youths.

2 brains better than 1

In July 2007, the Peace Corps agreed in a project with the Department of Education to "tandem" with Filipinos, meaning they work as partners.

"Our first day in class I am very much awkward because the language I might be saying might be wrong," says Carla, Melissa's Filipino counterpart in a high school in Batangas. "But as the days go by, it became easier having a partner because we spend a lot of time together, thinking of different activities that we're going to give to the students."

Two brains, after all, are better than one. By creating lesson plans together, the two teachers work hand-in-hand in developing what may be the best module their students could have.

There's no rivalry as they take turns teaching in front—one leads, while the other assists and holds the fort. The Filipino teacher takes care of the pedagogical part of the lessons, but the volunteers bring it a step further through games, songs, contests or whatever method they choose.

It's an unusual setup, but Pellegrilly says it has so far worked to everyone's advantage, especially since it lowered the teacher-student ratio and increased interaction. "The way Peace Corps works is that we are always working in collaboration," she says.

Imperative sentences

"Frisch," a 24-year-old volunteer assigned to a Bikolano high school, took his students to a basketball court, where they played an impromptu game to learn about imperative sentences or commands.

Each group, which had eight students, chose a player who would then be blindfolded. The goal? For the blindfolded shooter to make the basket—despite the obstacles that were set up—using only his team's instructions as guide.

"They have to give him imperative sentences to make it to the goal. Like turn left, jump, turn right, so that was one activity that was really successful. We do a lot of games, songs as well. It's good, it's really effective," Frisch says.

Using various ways of teaching, Melissa says, is necessary to get both attention and retention, especially since classes are usually large. In some areas, a classroom holds as much as around 90 pupils.

"I see most to learn something, we just try to think of the most interesting way to learn it in different ways because we all learn differently," she says. She refers to the songs she had composed as an example.

Group presentations

Group work and presentations also make students more confident in speaking straight English, says "Arbo," a 25-year-old Californian volunteer in Dumaran.

"A lot of students are afraid to speak up or if they're put on the spot, if you ask them a question, they're very afraid to speak. So I really try to focus on group activities to actually get them in practice speaking in English so they're more confident of their English skills and they also have the support of their peers," he says.

The unconventional methods, says Carla, have resulted in a marked improvement—30 to 32 percent—in last year's National achievement Test in English.

The volunteers believe they have produced better English speakers, but Melissa and Frisch admit that their students still need to work on understanding what they're reading.

"Reading comprehension is one of the difficulties I've encountered. They can pronounce words and read in English, but they can't necessarily understand or parse all together," he says. Forming a book club is his answer to this issue.

Language camps

Aside from creating designated all-English zones on campus, the Peace Corps has organized two-week language camps for student-served areas, like Bikolandia. There, participants begin as "innocents" speakers but end up joking with their American teachers in Bicol English.

The volunteers may only be for two years, but Pellegrilly says the limited time may really pay to start the ball rolling for public schools that need assistance. The idea is to promote habits or projects that will sustain the school's development.

"They're an additional asset for schools with limited resources," she says.

The American volunteers point out that their Filipino counterparts are just as capable if not then more capable.

"All other teachers in our English department are incredible. They're well-rounded and capable," Frisch says.

"I'm just here as a catalyst to push things along for a couple of years to help them find a way that they can start some projects and sustain them even when I'm gone."

THE NEW THOMASITES A Peace Corps volunteer, one of 132 currently in the country, is devising ways with Filipino teachers in addressing areas of concern in education like the country's English proficiency.

Why Inquirer didn't run story

Front page A1

to speculate on any information that should jeopardize their safety," he said.

Ocampo thanked the media outlets "who allowed the request to happen," but said the network thought it was "okay" that others did not heed it.

"They got the stories from interviews with other sources. That's OK. We are just sticking to our editorial statement on the matter," he said.

He added that making such a request to other media agencies would not be a company policy and would be made "on a case-by-case basis."

News blackout

ABS-CBN news and current affairs head Maria Ressa appealed for a news blackout on the reported kidnapping of Dillon and company to not to jeopardize their safety.

"In deference to the safety of Gen Dillon and her crew, the inquirers decided to hold the story for just one day," said Inquirer editor in chief Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc.

Ressa phoned the Inquirer on Monday to appeal for a news blackout until 5 a.m. yesterday while negotiations for the release of the ABS-CBN team were ongoing.

She told Magsanoc that reporting the abduction would pose a danger to the lives of Dillon, Jimmy Encomienda and Angelo Valderrama.

Ressa said the news blackout was important because the network was afraid that other extremist groups in the area might take advantage of the situation.

In response to Magsanoc's reservations about the news blackout, Ressa said she had also appealed to other newspapers, ABS-CBN's rival network GMA-7, the wire service agencies and the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines to observe a news blackout.

The Inquirer editor in chief initially suggested that the blackout last only until midnight of Monday, but Ressa appealed for up to 8 a.m. of the next day. She said one of the network's news executives would be flying to Sulu to help in the negotiations.

Maharadatu Amad Ibrahim, Prospero Pichay have also called for a news blackout on the kidnapping.

Even the military is right-tipped on the matter, with its spokesperson, Lt. Col. Ernesto Torres, stressing that the Philippine National Police was the lead agency on the case.

Torres said the military had been monitoring police operations to rescue Dillon and company upon the instructions of Armed Forces Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Alexander Yano.

"We are carefully gathering information so as not to jeopardize the ongoing efforts of the PNP and other servers to release Ms. Gen Dillon safely," Torres told reporters.

Nonetheless, the military said be ready to provide support if needed, he said.

Differing opinions

In phone interviews, veteran journalists expressed differing opinions on ABS-CBN's media gag request.

Sergei Santos said the request was "actually an attempt to manage the news."

"It was a sensitive story but public interest was already there. It should not have been managed," Santos said.

He said covering the story with the media would have allowed people in Sulu of what was really happening.

"People there can be bullied into a false sense of security. The complete story had to be given to cover all possibilities and lessen speculations," he said.

Santos said other media outlets should not have heeded the embargo request and "should have come out with the story with a special sense of responsibility."

"Said everything should have been confirmed first," he added.

Hal Luis F. Teodoro, journalism professor at the University of the Philippines and himself a columnist and media critic, disagreed.

Teodoro said ABS-CBN was well within its rights to "protect its own reporters."

He said the abduction of Dillon and company was not reduced with "public interest, at least for now."

"Let's see what happens," Teodoro said, adding:

"The question is: Did the media do the right thing in heeding the request? I think that would have been an individual call of the editors. I think their decision (to hold the story) was correct."

Teodoro also said coming out with the story might have put Dillon and her crew in more danger.

NUJP position

Jose Torres, chair of the National Union for Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP), said his group supported the news blackout on the abduction of Dillon and company.

"If that story came out, it might have angered the abductors and the captors could have been harmed," said Torres, who has written a book on the Abu Sayyaf kidnappings titled "Into the Mountains."

But Torres hastened to add that heeding the embargo request should have been good for the "initial hours" after the abduction.

"There are some confusion on who was really responsible. Any one could have taken advantage of the situation," he said.

Torres, who is also chief of GMANews.tv, agreed with Santos in saying that people in the area should have been informed of the events for their own safety.

"If the information is all clear, then that should have been the time the story should have been out," he said. "It's really a question of balance on the part of the editors and a question of ethics. Lives and the people's right to be informed should be balanced."

With media outlets heeding the request of ABS-CBN, Yontoc said he hoped other television broadcasters, that network would also heed requests from victims' families to hold the story to safeguard lives.

"After all, reporters aren't any special than everyone else. We are all also workers and employees," he said.

'Stop talking'

Speaker Nograles also called for a news blackout on the matter.

"If we keep on speculating, we are in fact going to jeopardize the safety of [our] people. It's best to have a news blackout about it... and stop talking about it, and just hope for the best," he told reporters.

Nograles said he and other leaders from Mindanao were "worried" about Dillon and company as well as the implication of their kidnapping on the Philippines' image.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye was more on the serious being taken by Malacañang regarding the abduction.

"We hope for Dillon's safety and that of her crew," Bunye said in a statement. "Likewise, we appeal for caution and restraint in media coverage so as not to unduly hamper efforts to rescue them." With reports from Athel Ludwig Antelloan, TJ Burgonio, Akiko Sioco and Christine D. Avendaño

WHAT WENT BEFORE

MOST OF THE ABU SAYYAF's early hostages were abducted, but a number actually went to the bandits' lair on their own accord.

On July 1, 2000, TV reporter Willie Almeda and 13 other members of the Jesus Miracle Crusade entered the Abu Sayyaf camp in Talipao town in Sulu. They paid $1,000 and 35 sacks of rice for permission to visit the camp and pray over the 21 mostly foreign hostages captured by the bandits in April from a diving resort in Malaysia.

Almeda said he and the other "prayer warriors" would stay in the camp for 40 days of fasting.

The group had embarked on the visit against the repeated advice of government officials and thus elicited little sympathy when, in the middle of August, the Abu Sayyaf announced that Almeda and his followers were also being held hostage.

They were released three months later, but not before Almeda suffered a stroke that reportedly left him partially paralyzed.

On July 3, 2000, German journalist Andreas Lorenz was seized by about 20 armed men in Pkulan, Sulu. He had earlier thought those gunmen would guide him to an Abu Sayyaf hideout where he hoped to interview three German hostages.

It was the second time in 2000 that Lorenz was abducted. On June 2, he and other foreign journalists visited the Abu Sayyaf's jungle lair-hoped to try to interview the hostages, and were taken captive. They were released on the same day after being cow a collective ransom of $25,000.

Lorenz was released—for the second time—on July 27, after 25 days in captivity. Sources said P48 million was paid for his release.

He has vowed never to return to Sulu again.

On July 24, 2001, ABS-CBN reporters Sid Ganzon and Mian Mercaspad were abducted as they were returning from an interview with an Abu Sayyaf leader in Patikul.

They were released after five days, with government officials and ABS-CBN insisting that no ransom was paid. But in a report, figures Franco Pentoy quoted a source close to the government negotiators as saying that the bandits were paid P6 million.

In February 2002, investigative reporter and Nieza producer Arlyn dela Cruz phoned from Sta Cruz, Lulu "Cherie" Singson to say she was on her way to see the Abu Sayyaf in Jolo when she was snatched. The kidnappers, according to Singson, were demanding P48 million for her release.

Dela Cruz was freed after 99 days. She denied speculations that ransom was paid for her freedom. Allan Nicholas, Inquirer Research

JOB
YOUR CONNECTION TO BETTER PEOPLE. BETTER JOBS

Abus holding TV crew in Sulu jungle

Front page 1

tenens of Tulipan, Patikul and Indanan.

Again quoting witnesses, Maddun said Dellon and company were ordered to alight from the pickup and to walk into the Lahbah interior.

Driver released

He said the driver and the dispatch, or, whose names have not been made available, were freed at around 10 a.m. on Monday.

"That's probably the reason there was talk that even the professor was freed. But as of now, only the driver and the dispatcher have been released, and no one else," Maddun said.

Chief Supt. Leonel Gobilas, police chief of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, said that according to initial information, the gunmen brought their captives in the Kinamoon complex situated in the middle of the towns of Indanan, Maimbung, Patikul and Parang.

Behind the terrorist with his victims "because the Maimbung police station is there and a detachment of the Marine Battalion Landing Team 4 is also there," Mitchin said.

'Man of peace'

Gobilas said the kidnapers that as far as the ARMM police were concerned, only three civilians were in the hands of the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu.

He said the ARMM police "cannot use force" while doing "their best to ensure the safe release of those ABS-CBN personnel—Cox Dellon and her crew members."

Gobilas said Dimaporo had yet to be considered as one of the victims. "We are still determining his identity and we need to probe deeper into his background."

Peace advocates quickly vouched for the professor's integrity, calling him a "man of peace."

Lanang Ali Salam Islands, secretary general of the Mindanao Peoples Caucus (MPC), told the Inquirer: "Dimaporo is our negotiator for peace in the area, being our Sanggu Councilor chair."

In a statement, Amado said Dimaporo had been "a generous and reliable guide of many visitors in Sulu, and has steadfastly protected his visitors even at the risk of his own life."

Fr. Bert Layosa, an SJPC convenor, condemned the abduction and appealed to the gunmen to free Dimaporo and the others.

"Professor Dimaporo is a man of peace. He should be freed without conditions along with Dellon and her crewmen," Layosa said.

Asiatic Strampo said: "I am deeply worried about my husband's health, and I feel bad that some officials don't consider him a bishop victim."

She said her husband was suffering from arthritis and that he had not brought his medicine with him.

She added: "My husband is a good man, a good father, a good provider. If he were bad, we would not have 10 children and we would not be still living together."

Coordination

The provincial government of Sulu has formed a crisis management committee to work on the release of Dellon and company.

On the phone with the Inquirer, Sulu Governor Tan said journalists covering hostile areas should make the necessary coordinations with local authorities ready-set.

"Dellon arrived in Sulu on Saturday afternoon. She moved around but never coordinated with the local police or local government officials. This is one lesson that we need to consider at all times," Tan said.

He reminded journalists to exercise utmost care during coverage and maintain coordination with local government officials.

Gobilas made a similar call to journalists.

But he said Dellon's group was able to coordinate with the military, which provided escorts from the Task Force Comet.

He said that after her group's coverage in Maimbung, Dellon left without the escorts.

This is not the first time journalists and other people were taken hostage by the Abu Sayyaf. (See *"What Went Before" on Page A22.)*

Unpar reiterates no rape (We should have learned lessons by now), Dellon said.

No assurance of safety

Bernawest Salapuddin of the Bangsamoro Women Organization said that with his access to different armed groups, Dimaporo was "one credible person" in the area.

"But still, even if you are the Sanggu Councilor chair, and you are involved in solving conflict or establishing zones of peace, there is no assurance that you are safe," she said.

Salapuddin said even being a native of Jolo hardly mattered in abductions. "Most of the kidnappings that are publicized by the foreigners create relations. The fluidity and volatility of the situation have to be considered all the time."

Gobilas said ARMM was apparently working on its own to secure the safe release of their three personnel. "But we are doing our own efforts and we are closely coordinating with the crisis management committee," he said.

As of 3 p.m. yesterday, many have volunteered to negotiate for the release of Dellon and company, Gobilas said.

"Any shooting gunning somebody," he said, but refused to name them.

ARMM Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan also condemned the abductions and directed Muslim religious leaders in Sulu to "to use their influences in securing the safety of the victims."

'They cannot leave'

The day after she and her crew went missing, Dellon was able to get in touch with her superiors and informed them that they had been "detained."

ABS-CBN news and current affairs head Maria Ressa told the Inquirer on Monday that she had been "in touch" with Dellon more than morning.

"They were being detained, they cannot leave," Ressa said, adding that at that point, it was only Dellon who knew what was happening, and the cameraman and "kidnapper over-the-counter" but they were being held.

Ressa was not clear on what group was holding Dellon and two men captive.

The ABS-CBN official phoned Inquirer editor in chief Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc to appeal for a news blackout for the safety of Dellon and her cameramen. (See story on Page A1.)

Ressa said there were ongoing negotiations for the captives' release.

"We have people there on the ground talking," she told the Inquirer.

Early yesterday, ABS-CBN issued a statement confirming that Dellon, Valdezuela and Encarnacion were missing in Sulu.

"We efforts are underway to find them and bring them home. Until we learn more details, ABS-CBN News requests other media to report on this matter with utmost consideration for the safety of our news team. ABS-CBN News is in touch with the families and asks that their privacy be respected," the company said.

Rescuers

The Philippine National Police is verifying reports that rescuers is being demanded for the freedom of Dellon and her cameramen.

"We get several news in a moment, but we don't know yet who is rescuer here, and what amount," PNP Director General Avelino Razon told reporters in Camp Crame yesterday.

"The reports are very unclear at this point ... and there are things ABS-CBN are giving us that we are not at liberty to reveal," Razon said.

He said the PNP was treating the abduction as a "training personal" case rather than a full-blown kidnapping.

Razon said the PNP in Manila was in close coordination with ABS-CBN, the military and the ARMM police headed by Gobilas, and that intelligence units and the elite Police-to-Crime and Emergency Response (Pacer) teams, which specializes in hostage-for-ransom cases, were on the case as well.

Not Abu territory

According to Razon, the area where Dellon and company disappeared is not the territory of the Abu Sayyaf because the latter is "supposed to be on the run."

He also said Dellon and her crew did not coordinate with the military and police when they landed in Sulu.

Razon said that while the PNP was preparing for a "worst-case scenario," he hoped that Dellon and company were safe and just "deeply imbedded" with the Abu Sayyaf. *With reports from Alexis Romero and Juliet Labog-Javellana in Manila, and Abdulwin O. Jurtasulan, Inquirer Mindanao*

Sayyaf leader wants to give up, says DOJ chief

By Jerome Aning

JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL GONZALEZ said yesterday that the leader of the Abu Sayyaf faction in Sulu, Radullon Sahiron, had sent surrender feelers to him.

In a press briefing, Gonzalez said he received three weeks ago a letter from Sahiron who said he and his "followers" wanted to surrender to the government. The letter was delivered by an emissary, who followed up the request last week, he said.

Gonzalez said his office had yet to authenticate the letter. He said that he had met with Sahiron's brother Yasraf Jakiri and asked for his help in the authentication and possibly in the negotiations.

Sahiron in his letter laid down conditions for his surrender, such as the amnesty, cash payments for firearms to be surrendered and community livelihood projects.

"It's the government's decision if we will set the conditions, if there are any," Gonzalez said.

He said the United States was offering $5 million reward for Sahiron's capture.

He said his "gut feeling" was that Sahiron's plans to surrender had nothing to do with the abduction of ABS-CBN reporter Cox Dellon.

SOMEWHERE IN THE SULU JUNGLE, CIRCA 2002 Radullon Sahiron (with headband), who is said to have been sending surrender feelers, was photographed in Sulu after escaping from nearby Basilan Island after the group's kidnapping of more than 20 people most of whom were children

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Grisly end for 5 QC household members

Robbers on killing spree stab 6, including 3-year-old; house set on fire

By Jeannette I. Andrade

ROBBERS BROKE INTO THE HOME OF A Chinese-Filipino family in a posh subdivision in Quezon City before noon yesterday and stabbed six household members, including a three-year-old girl, before setting the house on fire in an apparent attempt to hide the crime.

Only Dr. Geronimo Ang, 86, survived the attack and is undergoing treatment in a hospital for third-degree burns.

His wife, Felicitas, 76, who also sustained severe burns, died from multiple stab wounds as she was being carried at the Philippine General Hospital.

The couple were pulled out by rescuers from the basement of their burning two-story house on Tahajas Street, Tahajas Village, Sta. Mesa Heights.

Their 3-year-old granddaughter, Mina, was killed in the fire, along with the family's three housemaids. Their bodies were badly burned and hardly recognizable.

The girl, who had been stabbed in the back, was found in the arms of one of the maids who also sustained a stab wound. Lying next to them was the body of another housemaid.

The third housemaid was found inside the bathroom with her left hand nailed to the floor. Her body also bore stab wounds.

SPOT Intv Abad of the Quezon City Police District Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit (QCPD-CIDU) identified the three housemaids only as Gloria, Maria and Luisa. Their attackers fastened up them up and gagged them mouths with packaging tape.

The robbers then ransacked a vault inside the house and escaped on board a beige Toyota L-300 van, Abad said.

A resident in the area, who asked not to be identified for security reasons, said she saw the van parked across the Ang house at 11:30 a.m. yesterday.

She added that Mina, the couple's grandchild, had just been picked up from school and dropped off by her parents in her grandparents' house.

A fireman said the explosion came from a liquefied petroleum gas tank whose contents were more have been doused up by both spouse by the robbers.

QCPD-CIDU investigators are conducting operations to identify the robbers.

CURIOUS crowd gathers around stores in Tatyan Village, Quezon City, scene of a vicious attack on six tenants by robbers. Only one person survived the incident. RAFI LUCAS

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URBAN INSTITUTE OF REAL ESTATE

STUDENTS of the Bolanosa Elementary School, which was to be demolished, wait in vain inside its empty classrooms for their teachers to show up. RAFI LUCAS

QC students force open gates of closed school

By Marlon Ramos

THE METROPOLITAN MANILA Development Authority demolished yesterday's opening of classes in public schools in the metropolis as unjustified.

MMDA General Manager Robert Benjamin said that although the agency mentioned heavier than usual traffic, the situation was generally under control.

The situation, however, was anything but normal in the Bolanosa Elementary School (BES) in Project 6, Quezon City, where gates were forced open by some 400 students and their parents.

The school was earlier ordered closed by Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. to make way for the construction of a sports complex upon the recommendation of Dr. Nemesia Punzalan, the QC school division superintendent.

BES students were eventually ushered to transfer to the new St. Pius V Kalaw Elementary School (SVBES). Led by officials and members of the Parents-Teachers-Community Association, the protesters assembled in front of BES as early as 6 a.m. yesterday.

When some of the teachers arrived after they waited for them inside the campus, the protesters went to SVBES where they talked to the school principal, Nimfa Tolentino.

Tolentino, who used to be the officer in charge of BES, told the parents that she could not order the teachers to return to BES anymore. Tuesday to Thursday earlier and that all BES teachers had been absorbed by SVBES.

At around noon, the protesters left the area but promised to hold another protest on Wednesday.

Belmonte, however, denied that he ordered the parents he would not close down BES as he

SEE STUDENTS, A20

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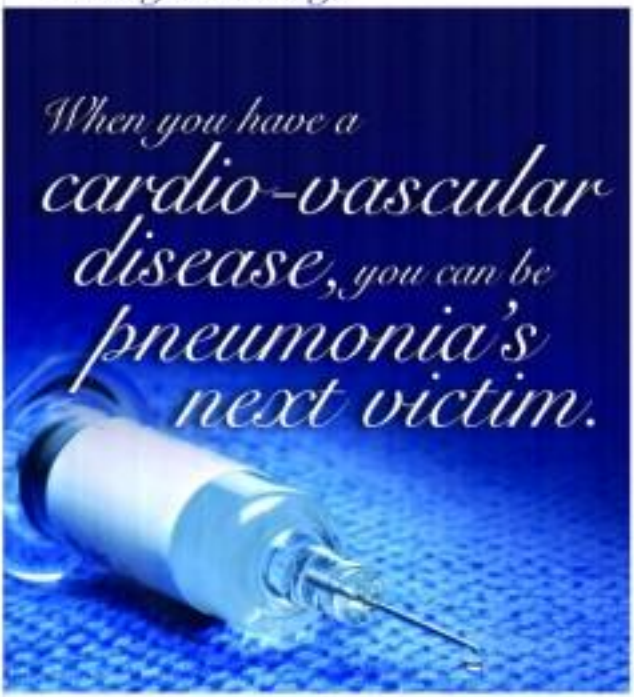

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Meningo case leads to hospital ER's temporary closure

By DJ Yap

THE HOSPITAL NG MAKATI (HNM) temporarily shut down its emergency room (ER) yesterday because of a suspected case of meningococcemia, or blood-related infection.

Dr. Bienvenido Carreon confirmed reports that the city-run hospital in Barangay Pembo had closed its ER for a thorough cleanup after it was learned that a baby who could be afflicted with meningococcemia had been admitted there.

Carreon said the closure of the ER had nothing to do with the cases of 32 babies who died of neonatal sepsis in the hospital, 25 of which occurred in May. The rest were recorded from June 1 to 9.

"Meningococcemia is a highly infectious disease so we had to close down the ER for a cleanup," he said, without going into details. A disease that commonly afflicts children, meningococcemia is caused by the Neisseria meningitidis bacteria and is characterized by fever, vomiting and delirium, according to the Department of Health (DOH) website.

Carreon declined to give further details about the meningococcemia case, saying only that he expects it to be cure soon.

Last week, Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay ordered the partial closure of HNM's delivery ward and the neonatal intensive care unit to give way to a cleanup.

The DOH has since begun an investigation about the possibility of an outbreak of neonatal sepsis, a blood infection contracted by infants less than 90 days old, in the hospital.

Binay also ordered the immediate relief of key HNM officials pending the results of the investigation.

Until then, the hospital would remain open but administrators would be restricted to high-risk and emergency cases, the mayor added.

MetroBriefs

Cops identify bus driver's alleged shooter

POLICE finally identified the motorists reportedly shot dead a bus driver on Monday morning over a minor traffic altercation after they found his abandoned car in a village in Quezon City, Supt. Marcelino Pedroso of the Quezon City Police District Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit (QCPD-CIDU) identified the suspect as Mc Delmo Abrantes, 38, of Barangay San Jose, La Loma, Quezon City, said to be the son of a retired fireman. Police found in his car, a black Toyota with license plate UPH 648, some 500 rounds of ammunition for a cal. 45 pistol. The vehicle was found at 9:30 p.m., Monday in front of a house on Bougan Street in Barangay San Jose. Witnesses said Abrantes shot Ramil Vargas, 42, the driver of a Japrina Lucky Deer Tours bus after their vehicles nearly collided on the southbound lane of Edsa in Kamuning. Vargas was hit twice and died while undergoing treatment at the East Avenue Medical Center. — Jeannette I. Andrade

2 Manila gov't workers fired for dishonesty

MANILA Mayor Alfredo Lim yesterday ordered the dismissal of two employees of the city treasury who reportedly devoted money from a businessman last month. Lim said the dismissal of business license inspectors Rocel Gutierrez and Alfredo Silva for dishonesty and grave misconduct should serve as a lesson to other local officials and workers. The two were arrested after they collected P150,000 from a trader who owed the city government P580,000 in back taxes. — Rea B. Bakilan

Parañaque forms rescue team

PARAÑAQUE Mayor Florencio Bernabe Jr. has formed a rescue team, called the Parañaque Elite Rescue Unit, which will be deployed during emergencies. "There is a need for the city to have its own rescue unit, given the disasters that recently struck parts of Mindanao and China, where the death toll has reached to eight numbers," Bernabe said. The elite rescue team was officially formed on April with an initial core group of 15 volunteer rescuers coming from different barangays and local government agencies. The Peru is led by Dr. Ted Gonzalez, a medical officer of the city health office. The team is now undergoing training on paramedical practices and procedures. — John M. Aurelio

Zonta Club of Muntinlupa induction

SENATOR Ejercito, the first Filipino to be elected Zonta International president, will induct the new officers of Zonta Club of Muntinlupa & Environs Foundation Inc. tonight at the Chinese Gardens, 2F 2 Caldera St. Ayala Alabang Village. Ambassador Henrietta "Tita" T. de Villa will be the guest speaker. The officers and board members, who will serve from 2008 to 2010, are Ms. Loralinda V. Olivares, president; Cecille D. Jacinto and Ma. Linda F. Mendoza, vice-presidents; Ms. Phe Lino Bienvenido, secretary; Gloria D. Garma, assistant secretary; Beatriz R. Paz, treasurer; Marilyn Bautista, assistant treasurer; Marilyn R. Espiritu, Enda S. Hayudini, Jennifer Madigan and Evelyn K. Munsayac, directors. Zonta Club helps empower women through education and providing them with livelihood skills and opportunities.

QC students ...

From page A15

stressed that it was just practical to transfer to students to PVRHS.

"I never promised class anything. As a chief executive, I cannot by my decision to close down that school to rationalize the reason for the public school system in Quezon City," the mayor said in a phone conversation. "The resources of the city should be used to serve the greater interests of our people."

The mayor said to a minimum test such as to the inquirer that enrollment at SHS had been declining and since the nearby PVRHS has better facilities and an excess of classrooms, the merger of the two schools was a logical and sound decision which would mean no inconvenience to the students.

The decision, according to him, was made after a thorough evaluation by school security officials and a series of consultations with all parties concerned, including a public hearing in the city council.

On the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, on the other hand, a militant group welcomed more than 1,000 freshmen by interrupting their orientation program at the UP Theater with a lightning rally.

Some 20 members of the Student Alliance for the Advancement of Democratic Rights in UP suddenly went up on the stage while the UP Pep Squad was performing. They unfurled streamers and rallied for the rollback of tuition.

There were also protests conducted by the League of Filipino Students and other militant student groups in several universities and colleges in Manila. The groups criticized the government for allocating a meager budget for education and the hike in tuition and other related fees.

"Unusually unsettled and orderly" was how Chief Supt. Pedro Tango, Northern Police District chief, described the first day of classes, citing reports from police officials in the Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas and Valenzuela area and the NPD Tactical Operation Center. — With Nancy C. Carvajal, Jil Maj-ord Tiwi G. Santos

FIRST DAY Students of the Bagong Silangan Elementary School in Barangay Bagong Silangan, Quezon City, do cartwheeling exercises as their first day in school after the two-month summer break. — MARIANNE BERMUDEZ

Uneasy start for returning students, teachers in Novaliches

By Beverly T. Mathridad

IT WAS A TENSION-FILLED DAY FOR STUdents of Sauyo High School (SHS) in Novaliches, Quezon City who had enough on their hands on opening day—a rally, a student aide arrest and a visit from a former congresswoman.

The enemy was between students and school officials—the root of the unrest on the campus—still remains unresolved.

In between efforts by both parties to have a dialogue, police stopped students from staging protests against their principal, Modesto G. Villuris, and General Heroes, Teachers and Community Association (GETA) president Charlie Solon over charges of alleged misused funds allocated for students.

Ellen Bolambao, a representative of the Alagwa party-list who had been helping the protesting students and members of SHS in their cause, said one student was arrested by the police for carrying a protest placard.

The police were reportedly alerted by Solon to a lower ranking "terrorist group" were set to stage a rally in the school.

Lone enforcers also got a mouthful from Akbayan chairman emeritus and former deputy for representative Loretta Ann "Rosi" Rosales, who attended the dialogue in support of the students and teachers, who reminded them that freedom of expression was protected by the Constitution and the Department of Education (DepEd) student handbook.

With officials facing allegations of misuse of school funds, meanwhile, called for further talks with the students to find solutions to end the row.

"Let's go for a win-win solution. A family should be able to talk about these things and resolve it internally instead of staging a rally or going to the media," said Arlene Arboleda, a school teacher speaking in behalf of 2000 parents and Student Affairs.

She explained that the funds were used by the GPTCA to handroll the construction of computer laboratory for the school.

Arboleda added that the GPTCA decided to use the miscellaneous fees paid by the students while the school was still looking for sources of funds for the new computer room.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES
OFFICE OF THE PHILIPPINE NAVY BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Bonifacio Naval Station, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Supply & Delivery of Fresh, Clean and Potable Water of Philippine Fleet units afloat

1. The Armed Forces of the Philippines, through the Philippine Navy, intends to apply the sum as stated below being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the following Philippine Navy Projects. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.

Nomenclature/Activity	Approved Budget for the Contract	Date/Time: Pre-Bid Conference	Date/Time: Deadline for Submission/ Opening of Bids	Price of Bid Documents (non-refundable)
Supply & Delivery of Fresh, Clean and Potable Water of Philippine Fleet units afloat	Php 3,400,000.00	June 11, 2008, 9:00 am	June 23, 2008, 9:00 am	Php 3,000.00

2. The Armed Forces of the Philippines now invites Eligible Bidders for the **Supply & Delivery of Fresh, Clean and Potable Water of Philippine Fleet units afloat**. Delivery of the goods being procured and description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section I and Section III of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from PN BAC and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from **8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday to Friday**.
4. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount Mentioned in Para 1. The method of payment will be in the form of **cash**. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
5. The Armed Forces of the Philippines will hold a **Pre-Bid Conference** open to all interested parties on **June 11, 2008, 9:00 AM** at **Office of the PN Bids and Awards Committee, Bonifacio Naval Station, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City**.
6. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before **June 23, 2008, 9:00 AM**. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of Surety Bond or Manager's Check. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
7. **Bid opening** shall be on **June 23, 2008, 9:00 AM** at **Office of the PN Bids and Awards Committee, Bonifacio Naval Station, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City**. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

Office of the PN Bids and Awards Committee
BNS, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City
Contact persons: CDR CLEOFAS T. DELA ANGLE MN (PN)
Cell No.: 0917-6089-434
Tel No.: 813-3430, 843-4910 & 815-4000 local 2341
Email Add: pnbacbfb@yahoo.com

(Sgd.) ADRIANO F. MONAR JR
Commodore, AFP
Chairman, PNBAC

The WORLD

Editor Lorraine B. Ocampo

Democrats want to tax oil superprofits

WASHINGTON—WITH GASOLINE PRICES TOPping $4 a gallon, Senate Democrats want the US government to grab some of the billions of dollars in profits being taken in by the major oil companies.

Senators were to vote on Tuesday on whether to establish a windfall profits tax against the five largest US oil companies and readied $17 billion in tax breaks the companies expect to enjoy over the next decade.

"The oil companies need to know that there is a limit on how much profit they can take in this economy," said Sen. Richard Durbin of Illinois, the Senate's No. 3 Democrat.

Durbin warned that if energy prices were not reined in "we're going to find ourselves in a deep recession."

But the Democrats are going to have to overcome staunch Republican opposition to any new taxes on the oil industry. The five largest US oil companies earned $36 billion during the first three months of the year.

Majority Leader Harry Reid will need 60 votes on Tuesday to proceed with the oil tax legislation in the face of a threatened Republican filibuster. If he doesn't get 60, he likely will pull the bill from the floor.

Only last week, Reid was forced to withdraw a measure aimed at addressing global warming, falling short of the 60 votes needed to advance the legislation.

The Democrats' energy package also seeks:

● To make oil and gas price gouging a federal crime, with stiff penalties of up to $5 million during a presidentially declared energy emergency.

● To authorize the justice department to bring charges of price fixing against countries that belong to Opec.

● Require traders to put up more collateral in the energy futures markets to curb speculation.

Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky has acknowledged that Americans are hurting from the high energy costs, but he strongly opposes the Democrats' response and has ridiculed those who "think we can use our way out of this problem."

Oil executives, testifying before Congress last month, called the proposed taxes "punitive" and warned that they would discourage domestic oil and gas exploration and production, possibly causing prices to rise instead of fall.

The American Petroleum Institute, which represents the major oil companies, has been reminding lawmakers that when the government imposed windfall profits taxes on oil companies' domestic oil in the early 1980s, production dropped and imports increased.

But Democrats reject the comparison.

The Senate proposal would impose a 25-percent tax on profits over what would be determined "reasonable" and would allow oil companies to avoid paying the tax if they invest the money in alternative energy projects or refinery expansion.

The tax breaks that would be rescinded, given by Congress over the past five years, are expected to save the five largest oil companies about $17 billion over the next 10 years. The Democratic proposal would funnel the money into tax incentives for renewable energy sources such as wind and solar, and to promote energy efficiency and conservation.

More Senate Republicans have a different approach to dealing with the growing energy crisis—pump more oil and gas. AP

HUNGER STRIKE
An Indonesian student lies inside a coffin during a hunger strike against fuel price hikes in Jakarta. Indonesia raised fuel prices by nearly 28 percent last month to avoid a budget blowout amid the soaring cost of crude oil in the world market. —

Obama slams McCain on ailing economy

PASHINGTON—BEFORE OBAma unleashed record gas prices and a spike in US job losses as he raised to make the ailing US economy the central focus of the presidential campaign, fishing Republican rival John McCain as President George W. Bush's corporate policies.

The Democratic presidential candidate launched a two-week economic tour on Monday that will take him to key battleground states in the November election.

Obama wants to ditch the focus on the economy Bolls show that the weak US economy has surpassed the Iraq war as the key concern for voters.

In his first speech since Democratic rival Hillary Rodham Clinton suspended her bid for the White House, Obama tried to woo her working class constituency, berating an house investment brokerages, energy execs and growing unemployment.

Obama spoke in North Carolina, where the working class has been hard hit, but it is not to say that could nevertheless across the electorate nationally.

He took part of his speech from headlines across the United States, noting that the average price of gas had just hit $4 a gallon for the first time, far below prices in Europe and elsewhere, but a shock to Americans used to cheap gas.

Repeatedly linking McCain to Bush, Obama said: "Our president swelled investments in health care, and education, and energy, and infrastructure on the shut of tax breaks for big corporations and wealthy CEOs." AP

WORLD BRIEFS

Encounters with Bill Clinton

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas—Jennifer Flowers and Paula Jones are offering Internet viewers the lurid details of sexual encounters they claim they had with former President Bill Clinton—for $1.99 a pop. The women, who gained notoriety in the early 1990s, have created a website offering videos of their thoughts on Clinton, his wife Hillary and other matters. Each video segment is available for $1.99. "It's a way we can get our story out there in our own words, without someone making their own interpretations or our behalf," Jones said. AP

EU summit is Bush's first stop

BRDSPYE RAVNJU, Slovenia—US President George W. Bush opened his last summit with the European Union on Tuesday with a long list of transAtlantic issues on his plate—Iran's nuclear ambitions, Afghanistan's woes, climate change, Mideast peace and perhaps even the US-EU flap over chickens. The agenda is broad for a summit that lasts less than a day, leaving doubts about what could be accomplished. There's also another, more personal issue: the upcoming goodbye event in Lithuania and Kosovo's independence. But Tiltrain is routine program and global warming is an item of the top concerns. AP

S. Korea's Cabinet offers to quit

SEOUL—South Korea's entire Cabinet offered to resign Tuesday as President Lee Myung-bak struggled to dampen anger at public uproar over the planned resumption of US beef imports. Eight senior presidential advisers had already offered to quit and went to Lee to request similarly for the beef dispute, but Lee has not decided whether to accept those resignations. The government agreed in April to lift almost all restrictions imposed on imports of US beef over fears of mad cow disease. The decision sparked weeks of protests demanding the government renegotiate the beef deal amid perceptions it did not do enough to protect citizens. AP

An angry, lonely young man

TOKYO—The suspect in a knifing rampage that left seven dead in Tokyo was hunted by prosecutors on Tuesday, as media reports pulling together internet postings and police statements drew a picture of an angry, lonely young man who meticulously planned the deadly attack. Tomohiro Kato, a 25-year-old factory worker, was transferred from police custody to a holding cell at the Tokyo prosecutors' office, where he was expected to undergo further questioning into Sunday's attack in which he allegedly slammed a rented truck into a crowd of pedestrians, then jumped out and began a stabbing spree. AP

China quake lake draining quickly

CHENGDU, China—Water poured rapidly from a towering lake formed by China's massive earthquake, as rescue crews stood on alert for possible flooding in case of an unconstructed breaching of its unstable banks. State broadcaster CCTV on Tuesday showed water flowing quickly out of Tangjiashan lake, flooding the lying areas of the devastated town of Beichuan and downstream. Residents in the area were previously evacuated and others along the river were preparing to leave if waters rose too high. AP

Salmonella outbreak in US

CHICAGO—US officials hunted for the source of a salmonella outbreak in 14 states linked to three types of raw tomatoes, while the list of supermarkets and restaurants yanking those tomatoes from shelves and dishes grew. McDonald's, Wal-Mart, Burger King, Kroger, Outback Steakhouse, Whole Oats and Taco Bell were among the companies that voluntarily withdrew red plum, red Roma or round red tomatoes unless they were grown in certain states and countries. The US Food and Drug Administration is investigating the source of the outbreak. "We are working hard and fast on the case and hope to have something as quickly as possible," FDA spokesperson Kimberly Hawkings said. AP

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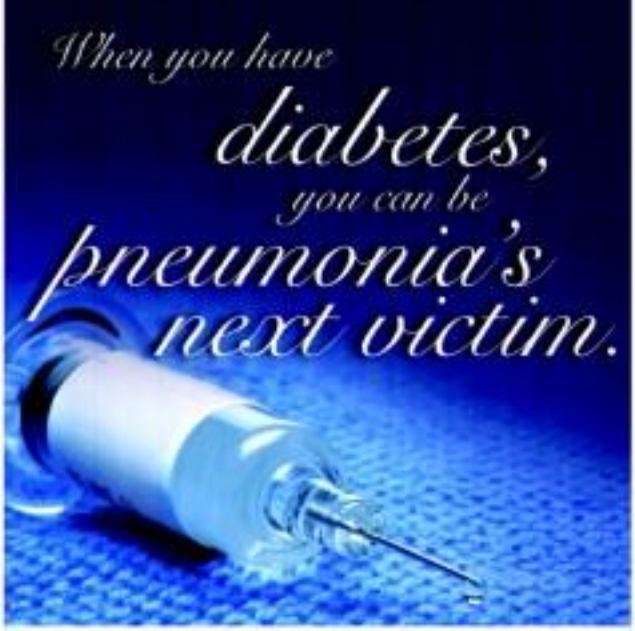

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WHAT'S INSIDE
Lakers hope that home is where their game is /A31

SPORTS
Editor Teddyboy S. Molmisa Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ochoa

57 days to the 29th Summer Olympics

Aces battle rejuvenated Dragons

TALK 'N TEXT's Hsu Carsbee makes a shot off Coca-Cola's Mark Macapagsiin Sunday's game won by the Tigers, 105-89.

By Marang B. Castillo

THE COACH DIDN'T KNOW IT THEN, BUT MAYBE HE HAD A PRETTY GOOD IDEA THAT THE Welcoat Dragons were poised to open this game.

Moments after steering Alaska to a fifth straight win against Ala23 in the Smart PBA Fiesta Cup, one would think Tony Conti wouldn't talk highly of the color-fumbling Dragons, who fell to their fifth loss in a row to Magnolia two days ago.

"I think that sport from this game (against Ala23, which the Aces won, 86-84), Welcoat is the most dangerous opponent we have in this stretch," Conti said Friday. "We have to play tough against that team next week (today)."

The following day, the Dragons found brilliance from nowhere and brought down league power Purefoods, 112-97, to an out-of-town venue in Tagbilaran, Leonz del Norte, to keep alive their flickering hopes of advancing to the playoffs for the first time.

Defending champion Alaska (ph), first first-round on the line today when it battles the Sea-to-the-wall Pirlocast aces in the 4:30 p.m. game at the Antonio Gelacasa in Cebu.

Rosangay Sinobos, remarkable, aim to gain an eighth place (in which the Gin Kings drag it out with the Tender Juicy Hotdogs in the 7:30 p.m. contest.

Conti said it himself... the victory over the Express was one of many of the team that startling idea for the most successful franchise of the 1990s.

STANDINGS	W	L
Coca-Cola	5	1
Red Bull	5	1
Ala23	4	2
Alaska	4	2
Magnolia	3	3
Welcoat	3	3
Talk 'N Text	3	3
Sta. Lucia	2	4
Purefoods	1	5
Meralco	0	6
Welcoat	0	6

"In our first two (victories), we basically just had to hold off our opponents," Conti explained. "Tonight, we had to truly execute down the stretch."

That win by Welcoat made the Dragons dangerous again. Should they win tonight—even if they eventually don't make the playoffs—the Dragons will have doubled up their low performance in their last year that's in the league.

Welcoat was just a combined seven games last season and three more games in the Philippine Cup. The Dragons have never seen more than four games in any of their first three conferences.

While Gilles hailed the Aces on with an 18-foot jumper with 1.5 seconds left to the win, as Alaska sustained its streaky streak. From virtual, power three weeks ago, the Aces have emerged as a legitimate Final Four threat.

Kenady Holcomb will be there to again hamstring Miller, the reigning MVP who is coming more like an import. Jimmy Thies will be depended to do a lot of the dirty work underneath to give Holcomb some spells before the crucial stretches.

Manuel Gonzales and Corey Somers said on underrated local crew led by Bob Wadenright and Jay-R Reyes will be at the forefront of Welcoat's assault.

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Nike caging: Archers seek repeat against Eagles

PUNZALAN

DIRECT FIGHT (Philippine Arena)
2 p.m. — AE vs. La Salle
4 p.m. — La Salle vs. Ateneo

ROUND 1 OF THREE-2008 SPALDING UNIcol is a pulsating overtime classic. And to think, it's only the pre-season.

Fajardo rivals Lo Sallo and Ateneo square off for the second time in five days in one of two semifinal matches featuring UAAP teams today in the 4th Nike Summer League at the Philsports Arena.

The 6 p.m. match could be the last glimpse of the two teams before they plunge into action in the 71st Season of the UAAP than tips off July 5.

One of the fiercest teams in the coming UAAP tournament because of its impressive pre-season run, the Eastern U battles University of the East for a place in the finals in the first game at 2 p.m.

The Archers got the better of the Eagles, 76-72, in overtime Saturday in the Filoil Invitational Cup.

Still, De La Salle coach Franz Pumaren said his team will be far from there best form heading into their showdown with the Eagles, who advanced to the semifinals after a rough 81-76 win over the Mapua Cardinals last Sunday.

"We're in decent shape," said Pumaren, who will miss injured guards Baser Mahinay and JV Casio. "We don't want to push too early because the season will last two or three months long."

The Archers, who reached the semifinals via an 87-69 drubbing of Feust University Thursday, have been drawing inspiring performances from rookie Hyram Bagunas. The shooting guard from San Beda shot 13 of his 23 points in the fourth quarter to fuel the overtime win over the Eagles, who rested in the United States early last month.

The Tamaraws overwhelmed the Lyceum Pirates, 88-75, Sunday in order to tie the series, while the Warriors needed clutch free throws from Patt Gregas and James Martinez to survive San Beda's fightback from 24 points down for a 91-87 triumph.

UE coach Diosdi Pumaren believes the Tamaraws' fearsome pre-season form that saw them chalk up eight straight victories makes them the heavy favorite to win the title.

Cordel F. Tapas

ANGRY: Mark Barroca (front) of Far Eastern University scrambles for the loose ball against Cirro Tiruso of San Beda

La Salle crushes Mapua

By Jacinto W. Pigo

EVEN A DEPLETED LINEUP COULDN'T STOP LA SALLE FROM DECLINCHING A final home shot following a 91-66 steamrolling of Mapua to five quarterfinals of the Filoil Flying V Pre-Season Invitational Cup yesterday at The Arena in San Juan.

PJ Ramos fueled a pivotal run bridging the third and fourth periods that moved a 59-51 lead into a 21-point bubble, 76-58.

The 6-foot-3 Ramos knocked in 12 of his 14 points in the second half as the Green Archers rolled to their second win without team star JV Casio, who's sidelined due to a hand injury.

Sophomore reserve Peeter Mahinay also claimed the game due to a vital relief stint, while rookie Parish will sit out some game suspension tomorrow due to a fighting foul that got the rookie ejected late in the third quarter.

The reigning UAAP champion La Salle will clash against NCAA back-to-back rides San Beda, which also bodied the absence of team ace Beng Bacudio for a thrilling 97-94 overtime triumph against the Ramon University to the other quarterfinal encounter.

Nigerian center Sam Okam buried an unchallenged shot with nine seconds of a second half to forge the Green Archers' 10-point lead.

Another Martinez shot raise of his team high 18 points in the first quarter that set the tone for the Warriors' strong start that extended to a 46-34 halftime advantage.

The Scores:

First Game

GE Ar – Martinez 18, Trade 12, Lee 12, Isaiah 10, Lingat 8, Arellano 7, Tandoang 5, Ferrer 3, Rivera 2, Perez 1.

[illegible]

Second Game

[illegible]

Standings

[illegible]

Int'l sports federation pays tribute to 'Campo'

By Ray Luarca

CAMPOMANES

WORLD CHESS FEDERATION honorary president Florencio Campomanes was honored recently by the General Association of International Sports Federations in Athens, Greece.

The 81-year-old Filipino, who held the reign of FIDE from 1982-1995, became only the 15th recipient of the award, joining such members as Juan Antonio Samaranch, president of the International Olympic Committee from 1980-2001; Istvan Gyulassy, World Basketball Federation secretary general from 1995-2002, and the late Prince Rainier III of Monaco.

First given out in 2003, the award was created to recognize and honor individuals who have made exceptional and lasting contribution to the pursuit of sports-excellence, sportsmanship and other legacy using sports as a means of contribution to the betterment of society.

Awarded with Campomanes during the 42nd GAISF General Assembly on June 6 were Ashraph Khan, former world No. 1 squash player and longtime president of the World Squash Federation, and Hayda Wade, IAU Associate Gymnastics technical committee president.

The Campomanes was honored for his contributions to the growth of FIDE membership (from 82 to 114) during his incumbency, the creation of fund for federations in need of financial and technical aid and promotion of chess in school programs.

SPORTSWATCH

Makati 7-cock finals today

THE BATTLE FOR SUPREMACY AMONG cockfight champions resumes at the Makati Coliseum today in the championship round of the WPCI 33rd Anniversary 7-Cock Derby.

Forty out of the 64 participants qualified for today's 4-cock finals, harnessed by 2007 World Slasher Cup champion Sangre Amarra, with his entry Red Rag (Orie), and Patrick Antonio-Wilbur Ibanez-ALDW Big Spur with perfect three wins each.

Also with three wins is the derby that offers a guaranteed prize of P3 million are Ram Lopez-A. Fernando, Russell Carreon-Negar Segovianda and Richard Bello.

'Rambulan' kicks off at SJC

THE COLIN REY SUBERU ACES FIGHT IN another showdown today in the opening round of the P1.6-million Allen Rambulan 8-Cock Derby slay at the San Juan Coliseum.

The event follows the 144-entry SJC International 8-Cock Derby topped by the 6-win entry of Lizon Representative and Bohol Pacquiao Mayor.

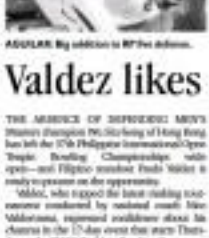
Some 75 fights are on tap in today's 3-cock eliminations. The three-peaters will get a share in the P68,000-top prize while the fastest will champ-cocklets P68,000.

Qualifying rounds will be slated on June 13, 18, 18 and 21.

BY TOP CHOICE

Japeth joining RP-Harbour five

By Beth Celis



AGUILAR: Big addition to RP five defense.

THE RP-HARBOUR CENTRE TEAM that's still awaiting for an invitation to join the William Jones Cup has confirmed the inclusion in the squad of Japeth Aguilar, the ex-Ateneo Blue Eagle playing in the US NCAA.

Ron MacDonald, the new Western Kentucky University head coach, gave former Ateneo standout Japeth Aguilar the go-signal to join the RP squad hoping to see in the second tournament in Chinese Taipei.

"That's great news," Harbour Centre team owner Mikee Romero told the business after learning of Aguilar's availability. "The team needs a big man like Japeth, especially on defense."

Norman Black, who heard Aguilar's skills when the then sullowy 6-foot-7 super sophomore the Blue Eagle defense in the UAAP, said Aguilar will make a huge impact on the team.

"Defensively he will be invaluable to the Philippine team," Black said, adding the new comrades 6-foot-9 banged "will try to block every shot."

Aguilar last action for the Division 1 WBLI squad in just three games before he was sidelined by a leg injury.

He logged a total of eight points, 10 rebounds, three assists, three steals and four blocks for the fifth spot.

"I'm happy for him and kind of proud," Black said of Aguilar, whose arrival in Manila has not been announced.

The RP-Harbour Centre squad has been practicing three a week just to ease the team gets a Jones Cup tonic. The tournament starts on July 16.

The organizers originally invited the Sarsaluna Basketball ng Pilipinas to send a PBA team to the tournament, but no pro team took the offer, prompting the SBP to tap Harbour-RP.

Valdez likes his chances in 37th RP Open

VALDEZ

THE ABSENCE OF DEFENDING MEN'S Masters champion Wu Shi-hong of Hong Kong has left the 37th Philippine International Open Triple Bowling Championships wide-open—and Filipino standout Paolo Valdez is ready to pounce on the opportunity.

Valdez, who topped the latest ranking tournament conducted by national coach Mac Valdezmora, expressed confidence about his chances in the 17-day event that starts Thursday at the Old Mall of Asia Bowling Center.

"I feel good about my chances," said Valdez, the former Asian bowler of the Year.

He bagged all four the tournament, sting ayaton commitment.

Valdez and world's top 5 masters champion Bhup Rivera are the spearheads of the RP men's team, which is also composed of Chester King, Frederick Ong, Tyrone Dagpuyan and Raul Miranda.

"All our coaches believe that we have a strong team in the men's division," said Valdez.

NCAA learns its lessons—no more gray areas

By Cordel F. Tapas

THE NCAA YESTERDAY ANNOUNCED NEW RULES covering players applying for the league rookie draft of the Philippine Basketball Association as the country's oldest collegiate league moved to pick up the pieces of a controversy-colored season last year.

NCAA spokesperson Henry Anlyn of College of St. Benilde said players wishing to join the draft must submit a letter of intent to the league's management committee to prevent a recurrence of the case last year involving San Beda forward Yousif Aljamal.

The NCAA policy board approved the new rule on the recommendation of the Manzon, which suspended Aljamal for joining the PBA draft without informing the league.

San Beda took the NCAA to court and were granted a temporary restraining order from enforcing a two-game ban slapped on Aljamal, who later helped the Red Lions in the second straight championship.

"The policy on players joining the PBA draft was vague," Anlyn said in yesterday's PBA Season 32 Shidoy's UN Avenue branch.

Anlyn also said that a new league policy will stop sanctions on officials and players involved in fights and brawls all the event, but will inside the playing venue, in the wake of the incident involving coaches Fernino Lim of San Beda and Ariel Vanguardia of San Rizal University who shoved each other along scorers' do of The Arena in San Juan after their varsity game.

Meanwhile, Shooters their Ding Louis of Mapua disclosed that the league will meet on June 16 to set basketball considerations, with Barry Gonzalez setting as commissioner and Ronald Cruz as technical chief.

For 84th NCAA, with the theme "To The fore at 84: Building Bridges Through Sports," opens June 28.

With knee doing OK, Tiger does nine holes

SAN DIEGO—US OPEN WEEK ARRIVED AT Torrey Pines on Monday, when Tiger Woods had to share the city-owned course with 60 fun competitors and a gallery that grew at every hole.

If anyone didn't realize that Woods had arthroscopic surgery on his left knee two days after the Masters, they wouldn't have known by the way he played nine Arnold Palmer's home nine in a pro-am round.

"He didn't say 'Ow' to me, so it must be good," cracked Bubba Watson, who played with Woods and amateur Jordan Cox from Stanford.

The Eisenhower tool off at about 7 a.m. under an overcast sky and with an wind coming

WOODS ↩

off the Pacific Ocean. Woods pulled out after nine holes, spent some time on the putting green and then walked toward the Lodge at Torrey Pines at about 10:15 a.m., accompanied by two San Diego policemen, rookie Steve Williams and walking coach Hank Haney.

Woods didn't speak to reporters.

"He looked good," Haney said. "He'll be OK. He's probably so far."

On Wednesday, Woods played his first round of golf since knee surgery, getting in 17 holes before stalling in a cart. He played his ultimate final day social light security, with no media or spectators allowed on the course. He stopped only when he saw a small group of people with cameras and recorders on the 18th green.

On Monday, Woods assembled his usual cast of hangers and crushed some drives. He didn't appear to favor his knee.

"I don't think the surgery affected him at all," Cox said.

Woods didn't hit every fairway. He played mostly ten to green, not bothering to count out on every hole. "But when did spend more time playing and putting toward anticipated pro phenomena at Torrey Pines, the first professional course to host the US Open.

Most of all, he looked fit.

"He's got a whole career to worry about," Watson said. "I don't think he's going to mess it up. That's what he did, he pulled out of Memphis [last month] because he's not ready, and if he wasn't ready here, he wouldn't show up, no matter what the course was, no matter what the crowd wants, no matter what the media wants. He's not going to end his career on some stupidity." AP

Lakers hope that home is where their game is

KOBE Bryant (24) runs to dunk past Boston's Ray Allen, left, in Game 2. Bryant has struggled against the Celtics so far. ↩

LOS ANGELES—BECAUSE THEY ARE FREQUENT FLYERS, THE LOS ANGELES LAKERS were allowed an unlimited number of carry-on items for their trip home.

It's common to be seen if any of those you rented in recent are.

After losing the first two games of the NBA finals in Boston, the Lakers returned to California on Monday in a hole as deep as Yosemite Canyon. Over 96 minutes, they have looked nothing like the team which pulverized Denver, pushed aside Utah and swatted away San Antonio with ease on the way to winning the Western Conference title.

"With the exception of an eight-minute stretch at the end of Game 2, Kobe Bryant and his crew have looked sickly in the finals.

Though down 0-2, and playing against history and the league's toughest defense, the Lakers felt good about their comeback—they whacked a 24-point deficit to two over the third TOO—and are confident they can swing the series after Wednesday's contest in Game 3 on Saturday.

They are 8-0 in the playoffs there and undefeated in 14 home games since March 28.

"All they did is protect their home court," said Lakers guard Sasha Vujacic, who made two 3-pointers in the fourth quarter of Sunday's 109-103 loss and had a potential go-ahead 3 blocked by Paul in with 34 seconds left. "So it's going to be a different story in LA."

Lakers Dateline Inc.

Only three teams—Boston against Los Angeles in 1969, Portland against Philadelphia in 1977, and Miami against Dallas in 2006—have overcome 0-2 deficits to win it all. The Lakers have some work to do to add to that list.

Through two games, they have been enthralled, outmanned, outenergized by a Celtics team now two wins from a 17th NBA championship. Following Sunday's loss, Los Angeles coach Phil Jackson was asked if the team can carry the momentum from their fitful, frantic fourth quarter comeback into Game 3.

"No, no," Jackson said. "It's 2,500 miles away. It's not for us now to."

The purple-and-gold, though, have been a different club while playing before super fan Jack Nicholson and Hollywood's glitzy crowd. Like the Celtics, the Lakers will try to fend off the energy of being back in familiar surroundings.

The Lakers need Bryant to start being himself and make some shots. He's 20-60-40 in two games. They need Pau Gasol to assert himself from start to finish, and they'll need their trusted bench to do more than it has done so far. Boston's reserves have outshined the Lakers' backups (Say every fellow). AP

Powe, Rondo get job done

By Hanner D. Jopson
Important Affil Correspondent

CHICAGO—IN THESE 2008 NBA Finals filled with the sport's biggest names—Kobe Bryant, Pau Gasol and Lamar Odom of the Lakers and Kevin Garnett, Ted Pierce and Ray Allen of the Celtics—the lesser heralded players are getting the job done for Boston.

Leon Powe, a Celtics reserve, burned the Lakers for 21 points in just 14 minutes and 59 seconds of play. He made 9-of-9 field goals and converted 3 of 3 free throws.

And who is Leon Powe?

The 6-foot-8 Powe, 26, was picked 46th overall by the Denver Nuggets in the 2006 Draft and was promptly traded to the Celtics on the same night. His life story was told on cutting and televi-

sion at halftime of Game 1.

Raised by a single mom, Powe is the oldest of seven children. At age 17, Leon saw his family's future gutted by a tragic fire. They spent the next six years living in homeless shelters, abandoned buildings and—sometimes—even in cars.

Often, Powe had to skip school to take care of his siblings. And many times, for painfully educational during the interview, he soon had to "pass up on food" so "we could eat."

When Powe was his junior year in high school, he died of a heart disease, forcing the Powe siblings to live in foster homes.

But all that bad luck didn't finish Powe's spirit. He persevered and went on to acquire a scholarship with the California Golden Bears.

Another cross-country move, to Celtics in Rajon Rondo, 22, who was supposed to be run played by Lakers point guard Derek Fisher, a 33-year old veteran with three championship rings to his name.

But then the Rondo has 19 points, 12 assists and two turnovers against Fisher's 24 points, 10 assists and four turnovers.

BOSTON forward Leon Powe is providing the Celtics with a lot of energy ... and additional firepower ... off the bench. AP/AFP

Kubica goals get bigger after victory

MONTREAL—NOW THAT HE'S GOT THAT first Formula One victory in his pocket, Robert Kubica wants more—a lot more.

"The goal now is to win a grand prix this season and we have done," the BMW Sauber driver said Sunday after running away with the Canadian Grand Prix. "We are leading the drivers' championship (now), so I hope the next races will be more competitive to try and maybe defend it until the last race."

With only seven of 18 races in the books, there's a mighty big order for the 23-year-old Polish driver and his team, the took advantage as Circuit Gilles Villeneuve when defending race champion Lewis Hamilton crook both himself and two contenders Kimi Raikkonen out in a pit road accident.

Kubica had a enjoyable race for the incident free game time a big lesser wound his first win to 29 career starts and the first F1 win for the BMW Sauber team, scoring in its 42nd grand prix.

After Kubica and several other leaders made their first stops of the day he was stopped at a red light at the end of pit road, waiting impatiently to rejoin the action.

Suddenly Hamilton smashed his Mercedes McLaren into the former of reigning world champion Fisher's cars, sitting alongside Kubica at the stoplight. AP

KUBICA ↩

Suns, Pistons unveil new head coaches

DETROIT—MICHAEL CURRY WILL BE THE Detroit Pistons head coach never sooner after only one year as an assistant coach.

A former NBA teammate is not surprised.

Curry is set be introduced as Detroit's new coach on Tuesday, Phil not president of basketball operations Joe Dumars told The Associated Press.

Dallas Mavericks guard Jerry Stackhouse, who played with Curry in Detroit, said Curry was like a player-coach during his career on the court.

"It was just a matter of time," Stackhouse said in a phone interview with the AP on Monday. "Everybody who knew Michael loved to be playing days knew this is where he would end up."

Curry was an assistant last season in Detroit under Flip Saunders, who was fired last week.

The Pistons finished the regular season a three-year deal worth $2.3 million a season. The team holds an option for a fourth season.

"I think he has a lot of good qualities about," new Phoenix Suns coach Terry Porter, who was a Pistons assistant with Curry last season, told the AP. "It's a pretty good lineup going [from assistant to head coach], but like Stackhouse said, he's a tremendous player—a real student of the life."

Porter was introduced to the media Wednesday and one of the first questions the coordinator some knew Phil Gordon, a basic his video happens to be the source of Phoenix.

"Coach, are we going to have a world champion team like you?" Gordon asked.

As rumor in the US Airways Center practice session laughed, grandson magazine Steve Nash turned to Porter and said, "The chair's hot already, isn't it?"

"I think it is a championship-caliber team," said Porter, who reportedly signed to a three-year contract worth almost $7 million. "I think they have some pieces in place that have obviously competed at that level over the last four years."

EURO 2008

The Netherlands shocks world champion Italy

BERN, SWITZERLAND—WHAT FOR an encore after performing? Any cold wins against France will do.

In the most surprising result since Greece won the European Championship four years ago, The Netherlands humiliated Italy 3-0, as Euro 2008 for the world champions' worst defeat in a quarter century.

"It is a perfect job," Netherlands striker Robin Van Persie told.

Reality soon is soon enough, though. On Friday, World Cup runner-up France is visiting.

"It was a historic feat. The new Italy, the world champion," Netherlands coach Marco van Basten said. "It's only the very first step. We have to see if we are able to repeat such a game against France and against Romania."

Despite having to face the headlines in the Gazzetta dello Sport, Italy still have his confidence day.

"We've got to be optimistic," coach Roberto Donadoni said. "That's one of the basics of our profession."

Still, the stunning defeat left World Cup goalkeeping hero Gianluigi Buffon with only one option.

"In the name of the entire team, I ask I have to apologize to all the Italian fans," said Buffon, who came close to a century that incurred the "unreasonable"—confident and troubled defense.

Then again, the Dutch perfected the "Clockwork Orange" way of switching seamlessly from defense to attack during the 1970s, and Monday was a fulfilling cup done unnerve fans.

Read van Nistelrooy and Wesley Sneijder scored in the first half, and standout defender Giovanni van Bronckhorst added the third on a counterattack in the 79th minute to give Italy its most lopsided loss in the history of the European Championship.

It leaves a team of veterans looking their age and facing elimination from the first round for the second straight European Championship.

For the Dutch, it was redemption after leaving the World Cup two years ago stained by one of the ugliest games in history, a 5-0 loss to Portugal involving four red cards and 16 yellows. AP

PLAYERS from both the Netherlands and Italy react after a goalie Dutch striker Ruud van Nistelrooy (second from left). ↩

SPORTS

Manny wants Hatton fight in November

By Roy Luarca

FILIPINO SUPERICON MANNY PACQUIAO wants British slug foe from Ricky Hatton by his next fight in November.

That is one resolution four, however, is dependent on Pacquiao emerging victorious in his June 28 showdown with Mexican-American David Diaz for the latter's World Boxing Council crown in Las Vegas, Nevada.

"After Diaz, I want to fight Ricky Hatton," Pacquiao told King Magsaysay in a recent interview. "That will be a good fight."

If he beats Diaz and gets his wish, Pacquiao—who survived the WBC super featherweight belt from Juan Manuel Marquez on March 15—will add at least five more pounds to fight Hatton's weight class.

Though, Hatton is a natural light welterweight (140 lbs), Pacquiao, who entered his professional career at 112 lb, believes the weight difference won't really matter.

Pacquiao explained that he kipped the scales at 147 lb when he bested Marquez in three rounds, also held in Las Vegas, and is used to sparring with fighters who weigh between 140 lb and 150 lb.

Actually, Hatton has been on Pacquiao's radar ever since Manchester's finest was beaten by Floyd Mayweather Jr last December.

Hatton's father, Ray, confirmed that Pacquiao indeed approached them after the Mayweather fight and that they are still considering the Filipino bill's (fight) proposal.

"Pacquiao's big at his weight and it would be a wonderful fight," the older Hatton told Sporting Life.

"They're just about got the two biggest followings in the world—where would you stage a fight like that?"

Even before the showdown with Marquez, however, Top Rank chief Bandoo and Pacquiao promoter Bob Arum broached the idea of staging Pacquiao-Hatton either in Dubai, United Arab Emirates or Las Vegas in November.

There may be a hitch, though, as Hatton—who is fresh off his victory over Juan Lazcano last month—is also keen on tangling Italian dynamite Paulo Madrigali in November.

MOLINA: Peaking at right time

Molina sinks 3 RP records

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THERE'S GOOD NEWS FOR A change, coming from Philippine swimming.

Miguel Molina, one of the country's six Beijing Olympics bound sailors, broke three of his own Philippine records in her tournament en route for the Center End clash on Aug. 8.

The 2007 Southeast Asian Games' most outstanding athlete was crowned in males while competing in the Janet Evans Invitational Invitational at the University of Southern California over the weekend.

Philippine American Swimming Association president Mark Joseph expected that the 24-year-old Molina would two minutes and 2.22 seconds in joining fourth in the 200-meter breaststroke event during his old record of 2:03.46.

He set the old mark in last year's Japan Open.

Molina then finished 11th in the 200m freestyle event where he clocked 1:52.36s, improving his 1:53.87 effort two during the 2007 Shell-Speedo World Championships where he narrowly missed the Olympic cut.

In the 200m breaststroke, Molina captured the silver medal with a time of 2:16.62, bettering the 2:16.80 he established during the 2005 Philippine SEA Games.

Joseph, however, said Molina's main mark to lower his record substantially to have any chances of landing a medal in the Beijing Games.

The trial time for country logged a medal in the Olympics was in 1932 through Teodio Eldoff-men.

"Miguel's been training for a long time and will be swimming lifetime bests in Beijing," said Joseph over email.

Joseph noted that the Janet Evans meet "is where the world's best can scrape, especially in an Olympic year, to do their best."

Mickhoux, grandfather of Filipino Olympic hurl Daniel Coakley was the first Filipino Olympic medalist and the country's only double medalist, so.

He won the bronze in the 1924 backstroke in Lausanne and another bronze in the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics.

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SK, Indonesian shuttlers join FDG tilt

KIM TODD-DEVIN, THE OTHER HALF OF the former world No. 2 in mixed doubles, heads the track list of former players vying for top honors in the PDG Badminton Cup which gets going Friday at the Araneta Badminton Center in San Juan City.

Joining him in the masters category of the event are Lim Sin-ann and Baek Su-hui, former members of the Korean national team, who will shape up with top local shuttlers, headed by Resurrecto and Ernesto Asuncion, Brandon Chan, Allen Benedict, Bobby Morales, Toby Gadi and event organizer Frederick Go.

Also in the fold are top Indonesian players headed by former Olympic silver medalist Tikan Haryanto, Bambang Supriyanto, former world no. 3 in men's doubles, and former Indonesian national team exclusive Sitying Kostantang Ida, Rudy Hidayat, Irene Tuti, Ming and King Rachmats.

Cash prizes amounting to P350,000, respective and Individual collie Jimmy will be up for grabs in the event to be graced by former beauty queens and TV personality Miriam Quiambao.

The two-day FDG Cup, which also features the elite category is actually the highlight of the Perfumer Cup Invitational Individual tournament set on Saturday.

The Perfumer Cup features the management and staff of the Perfumer Land Corp.'s (PLC) and its business partners, architects, contractors designers, management consultants, contractors and suppliers of PLC.

The annual event, held to promote fitness and camaraderie of the same time from construction among PLC's business peers and friends, will have five divisions, namely classes A, B, C, IronclE.

Laser tag zaps shooters' fear of harmful ray

By Jasmine W. Paya

COMPETITIVE SHOOTING TURNS MODern as laser tag, a simulation game using laser guns, hits the country for the first time.

"It's categorized as a sport in other countries and we hope to achieve that status in this country," said LaserGenius vice president Marshal Beck at the PSA Forum yesterday three weeks after launching the sport at the LaserG. Armor Arena in Market! Market! in Taguig City. "Other countries even have national leagues, like in Europe for instance.

Laser tag, which pits individuals or teams with a maximum of 12 players each, is played for 15 minutes with corresponding points for each target seen.

"Any player will experience an adrenaline rush," Beck said. "Laser tag is often compared to paintball and airsoft. But laser tag uses laser beams to tag the opposing players. There's no pain in playing."

Beck said the press conference, hosted by Shake's DS Avenue and Pagcor, that the laser beam they use is safe.

"The technology came from australia and have been tested by authorities," he said. "There's no risk at all even if you get the laser beam in your eyes."

Beck also said there is no age limit to playing laser tag. "Our vision is to get people into an active lifestyle," he said.

ASIAN SHOOT BETS: The country's six representatives to the inaugural Asian Schools Shooting Championships from July 27 to Aug. 3 in Singapore pay a courtesy call on Philippine National Shooting Association president Art Macapagal and PNSA National Youth Development Program chair Mathavini "Tai" Padilla (left) and Mitch Evangelista recently. From left, Steven Karl Gonzales, Shamin Lyn Gonzales, Miss Padilla, Dianne Ballentec, Carina Aida Victoria and Sandee Hermoso.

Barcial sweeps San Mig series

PETERAY WEBB, JAMIE BARCIAL OF SHELL-Pampilo, coming off a sweep that made him overall leader of the premiere 150cc Open division, eyes another victory in the third leg of the 2008 San Mig Coffee Underboner Ring Championship series set June 14-15 at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

Barcial will be up against a tough field that includes Orlando Geaxo, multi-titled champion John Jan, Glenn Aguilar and Mister Bautista. 2007 champion John Lee, Sampaol and young riders Mark Chavez of Pilipino Japanese Mikaela Fernando, who ended the Kids@Cup.

Barcial knows that making it back-to-back will not be easy. "I put through by last fraction of a second in the last leg and I don't think it's going to be different this time," he said.

Hoping to take their share of the limelight are Jao and Fernando who are also seeking big wins in their respective divisions.

Jao is gunning for a second straight triumph in the 125cc Iron Man Mig Coffee Sports Foundation class while Fernando tries to dominate the 110cc Petron Sports Production class.

Tiu misses speed mark but raises bar

ROSARIO, BATANGAS—DEfending champion Jonathan Tiu of Team Rev'Ground up his bid for a second straight Driver of the Year title after coasting to a fifth win in the second leg of the 2008 San Mig Coffee Drag Racing Championship at the Batangas Racing Circuit drag strip.

Tiu clocked 9.972 seconds, almost shattering his record of 9.901, to hold on to the lead and raise his tally to 75 points.

Sheldon Chan placed second in 11.409 seconds with Ryan Lee of Speedworks third in 11.501.

"I'm satisfied with my performance," said Tiu.

Ryan Lee claimed the first class crown with 12.140 seconds, with Mandaue'92 Autosports' Vheral Guerra second in 12.642. Chan third in 13.428.

In the Expert division, Alvin Commander of VISM Autoshop clocked previous ley winner Raul Mendezona Jr out of slips after both drivers committed breakout violations.

The duo posted times based on the dial-ups they submitted but Commander took the title in 11.933 to upstart Raul's 14.745. Anthony Allan Bello 114.075 placed third.

Topping the other divisions of the eight top racers were Mr. Motors in the Sportsman category and Herbert Gutierrez in the Lite Street division.

Find out how Shell Super Unleaded E10 can help you save on page B3.

BUSINESS

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ABRIENTA AIRS

Exports up by 4.9% in April

Shipments of electronics fall due to weak global demand

By Michelle V. Remo

MERCHANDISE EXPORTS in April grew 4.9 percent year-on-year to $4.32 billion, recovering slightly from the 0.6 percent drop posted the previous month, the National Statistics Office (NSO) reported yesterday.

This brought total exports for the first four months of the year to $16.86 billion, up 3.3 percent from that of the previous year.

Data from the NSO showed that the growth in April exports was led by the rise in demand for coconut oil and petroleum products, which offset the slump in the export of electronics and garments—the country's two major export products.

Electronics exports in April hit $2.92 billion, falling by 3.7 percent from the same month last year due to weakening demand brought on by rising fuel prices, among others. Analysts said demand for non-basic goods normally drop when oil prices soar because it forces households to limit their consumption.

The drop was consistent with earlier

REPORTS B7

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BACK TO BLACK

Rehab, reforms work their magic on PNB

By Michelle V. Remo

(Conclusion)

IN 1995, PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANK (PNB) moved to a new headquarters on Pasay City's Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard in Pasay City. The following year, it became a private entity when the government's stake was reduced to less than 50 percent. The partial privatization of PNB led to the entry of the Lucio Tan group as a major owner of the bank.

But when the financial crisis struck Southeast Asia in 1997, PNB suffered the same liquidity problems that affected most banks in the region.

Omar Byron T. Mier, current president and chief executive officer of PNB, recalls how the bank fared during the Asian financial crisis, described as one of the most difficult times in the banking history of the region.

"Banks like PNB had granted dollar-denominated loans to companies without foreign exchange revenue streams," Mier says. "So when the crisis struck and resulted in the depreciation of the local currency, many companies found their loans doubling in peso value overnight. This led to many non-performing loans."

Mier also says credit policies of PNB, like other banks, were too lax. This was partly due to the favorable economic environment in the years preceding the crisis. At the time, banks were simply complacent.

"The peso was very stable and the interest rate differential (difference between US and domestic interest rates) were low," Mier says, explaining how the crisis took the banking industry off guard. "Everybody had the impression [that the good times] would

REPAIR B6

Shares drop on oil concerns

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY CLOSED down 3.4 percent amid soaring oil prices and regional stock market weakness, following a Wall Street slide last week, dealers said.

The composite index fell 93.71 points to 2,645.90 points. The all-shares index fell 0.6 percent to 1,627.06 points.

Only eight stocks advanced compared to 85 decliners and 42 that were unchanged.

Turnover rose to P4.26 billion ($90.87 million) compared to P3.297 billion on the previous trading day.

There was no trading on Monday due to a public holiday.

The sharp downturn was "a reaction to

SHARES B6

Foreign direct investments slip as crisis bites

By Michelle V. Rosario

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENTS (FDIs) into the country registered a net inflow of P551 million in the first quarter, falling by 68.3 percent from the $1.000 billion recorded in the same period last year, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday.

For the month of March alone, net inflows of FDI settled at $206 million, higher by 94.4 percent than the $167 million recorded in the same month last year.

A net inflow arises if FDIs that entered the country exceeds the amount of outflows. The year-on-year drop in net FDIs for the first quarter was blamed on the worsening domestic economic climate, weighed down largely by a global slowdown and soaring prices of imported oil.

BSP data showed that of the $551 million in net FDIs recorded during the first quarter, $200 million were in the form of investment earnings, $193 million in fresh equity capital and $254 million in other forms of capital.

The $193 million in net equity capital was a result of $284 million in inflows and $91 million in outflows. The BSP said the inflows benefited mainly the manufacturing, mining, construction, hotel and tourist development, real estate and financial institutions, among others.

The reported slowdown in the economy of the United States this year is expected to drag down the Philippines' exports growth. The US accounts for 16 to 18 percent of Philippine exports.

Rising fuel prices, on the other hand, have restrained household spending and forced companies to delay their expansion plans. Analysts explained that the higher cost of petroleum forces households to trim down spending on non-essential items, which in turn, has put a damper on growth prospects for businesses this year.

Year-on-year inflation hit 9.6 percent in May, marking its fastest pace in nine years. The high inflation environment is one that started early in the year prompted monetary authorities to admit that the official goal of limiting inflation to a range of 3 to 5 percent this year is no longer attainable.

For the BSP here ever, the fact that the country was still able to register a net inflow of FDIs in March and for the entire first quarter is an indication that, in general, businesses still consider the Philippines a place worthwhile to invest in.

"Emphasis was maintained on all FDI components during the first quarter of the year despite the drop in investor optimism due to rising concerns about global uncertainties," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said in a statement released yesterday.

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42nd Marketing Strategies and Plans by Josiah Go ... July 17-18, 2008
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PLATINUM SPONSOR ABENSON OFFICIAL MEDIA PARTNERS BusinessMirror INQUIRER

Winston Garcia's housekeeping chores

NOW THAT WINSTON GARCIA IS PRIMARILY back at his desk at the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), instead of traipsing all over Malacañang meetings, perhaps he has time to tend to his housekeeping chores.

Recent press reports transpired that the interest on low-cost housing loans has been cut down to 6 percent a year. This is good news to the borrowers but terrible news to GSIS as the money they will not borrow renders the program...

The premiums paid by government employees and governmental agencies are held in trust by the GSIS. By law, these trust funds are guaranteed to be paid back to members and their beneficiaries at some future date in the form of benefits usually far from death or disability and pensions at retirement.

The actuaries have computed the present value and disbursements (including office overhead) on the basic assumption that the funds put invested immediately would be invested according to law.

In effect, members who will not borrow for low-cost housing will be subsidizing those who will.

A few years ago, the largest life insurance company in Japan collapsed because its investment earnings were lower than the assumed earnings on the premiums received. The same thing would still befall GSIS if Winston Garcia is left to his own devices.

As president and general manager of the GSIS, Garcia's main job is to see to the needs of members in accordance with the law.

Instead, Garcia is, ah, so generous to giving away money that is not his.

The next time he does this, even with unearned rental assets of over P400 billion, the GSIS is clearly having problems paying off government retirees?

Take the case of Nene Suazo of Cebu City. After 33 years of faithful service, she retired 23 years ago. All she got from the GSIS was a measly $1,000 for her contributions, interest, plus the government's share without interest. In all, she got a measly P95,694.91.

Suazo is now 80 years old, the money is long gone, and she is penniless.

Is this what a lowly government employee can look forward to at retirement?

My friend, Amado Cabarrus, founding president of the Philippine Association of Retired Persons, has taken up Suazo's case. So has written to formerly Cebuano, ERC exec manager of Tacloban, and Ella Yuhico-cruz of the public affairs office in Manila. All to no avail.

The basis of contention is whether or not Suazo may still entitled to a monthly pension after having received P26,099.91 as lump sum gratuity.

Finally, on April 21, Cabarrus wrote to Garcia. To date, the letter has remained unanswered. Now that Garcia is back at his desk at the GSIS, perhaps he can attend to his housekeeping chores. He can start by replying to Cabarrus's letter. Garcia is not going to get into the headlines, but he will be doing his job.

IPPs see high power rates even with Epira changes

By Abigail L. Ho

POWER PRICES WILL STAY HIGH EVEN if legislators succeed in amending the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001, according to the Philippine Independent Power Producers Association (Ippa).

In a position paper submitted to the Senate committee on energy Friday, Ippa president Ernesto Ordoñez said that, if anything, introducing changes to the Epira on that premise would only disrupt, instead of help, the industry.

"We respectfully observe that the proposed amendments to the Epira will weaken the competitive structure in the electricity industry that is already taking shape," he said. "Hence, we believe that the proposed amendments will not serve the purpose of lowering prices of electricity to a sustainable manner."

Apart from his role as the head of the independent power producers' group, Ordoñez is also a senior official of several Lopez family-owned or controlled power firms.

"Any form of amendment to the Epira will create a highly unstable framework that will engender uncertainty in the industry in a period when momentum has been finally achieved in the privatization of [National Power Corp.] assets," he added.

He noted that, to date, the privatization process had already resulted in close to $6.7 billion in proceeds, with 62.7 percent of the nine Napc generation assets sold to private investors and the National Transmission Corp. consensus successfully auctioned off.

"Amending the Epira now would reverse the successes that the industry had patiently strived or aspired for and endangers the unprecedented momentum in the implementation of the reforms," he said. "Nationalizers that would alter the competitive structure of the industry or change the regulatory setup at this late stage would be particularly counterproductive."

"The logical and rational consequence would be to preserve the momentum and continue on with the full implementation of the Epira so that the law's statutory objectives may be finally realized by the government, the industry participants and the consumers," he added.

The group continued to push for the reduction of royalties and other taxes on indigenous fuels, stating this was one of the ways to lower electricity prices without amending the Epira and "without disturbing the legal framework in the industry the stability of which Ippa and the private entities intending to participate are relying upon."

eTelecare opens 8th US call center

By Ronnel W. Domingo

NASDAQ-LISTED STOCKBROKER GLOBAL eTelecare announced it was opening on July 1 another call center in the United States amid continued strong demand for its services.

The Quezon City-based firm, which also trades on the Philippine Stock Exchange, said in a statement the new service delivery center is located in Jacksonville, Texas, and would be its eighth center in the US.

The other US call centers are in the three areas in Arizona, two in South Dakota, one in New Mexico.

The Jacksonville operation of eTelecare is expected to employ 400 people and bring the strength of the firm's US-based workforce over the 5,000 mark.

The new center also brings the firm's headcount worldwide to more than 13,000, of which some 10,000 or 77 percent are located in the Philippines.

Locally, eTelecare's existing sites include one in Makati City one in Quezon City, one in Mandaluyong City and another in Cebu City.

"As a multi-shore service provider with major operations on two continents, we continue to expand our delivery capacity—in this case to the US, Ambassador-affair eTelecare an expansive, well-trained work force and a first-rate contact center facility," said eTelecare chief executive and president John Chavez.

"These advantages will allow us to begin operations and support clients with high-quality services this summer," he said.

Darrell Penix, president of the Jacksonville Economic Development Corp., said eTelecare will soon be the city's second largest private employer.

He added that "eTelecare is a recognized industry leader with a successful track record of providing superior call center services to clients."

"We have been working closely with eTelecare over the last two months and they already have plans to be very involved in the community," Penix said.

Founded in 1999, eTelecare provides business process outsourcing focused on the marketing, retention and customer based segment of customer care services.

The company's services include technical support, customer service, sales, customer retention, chat and e-mail from both onshore and offshore locations.

Oil to flow from RP's newest field in June

By Michael Lim Ubac

OIL IS EXPECTED TO FLOW FROM GALOC field on June 26, with daily production seen to range from 17,000 to 20,000 barrels of oil, Malacañang announced yesterday.

"We are pleased to announce that the development of Galoc oil field is completed, and that the first flow of oil is estimated to [commence] June 26, 2008," Reyes told reporters.

Reyes pointed out that "this would be the first time" the development of an oil field was undertaken since 1992.

The oil that will soon flow from Galoc is expected to ease the country's dependence on imported crude by as much as 30 percent.

Galoc's anticipated production rate of 17,000 to 20,000 barrels of oil a day together with the 30,000 barrels of oil daily produced in other oil fields, account for 15 percent of the country's total oil demand on a per day basis, Reyes said at a press conference in the Palace.

He did not identify the other local oil fields.

Independent appraiser GaffneyCline and Associates has estimated the production rate at Galoc field to reach as high as 23,000 barrels a day on average, in the first year of production.

Reyes said that the oil found in Galoc was of "high quality."

"[The oil is] light, sure many mid-medium content to suffer ... [it] could be refined in local refineries," he added.

He also said that the country would earn from the sale of oil, "which would be benchmarked internationally."

The energy chief expected that the combined local oil production would help bring down local pump prices. Last week, oil in the world market jumped $11—the biggest one day rise ever—to hit a new record above $130.

Reyes said the country could expect about $1.4 billion in foreign exchange savings until the well runs dry.

Current oil reserves in Galoc field is estimated at 18 to 20 million barrels, he said.

Reyes said "domestic refineries will be given priority" than lowering pump prices, since they need not spend as much on freight, insurance and handling of oil coming from Galoc.

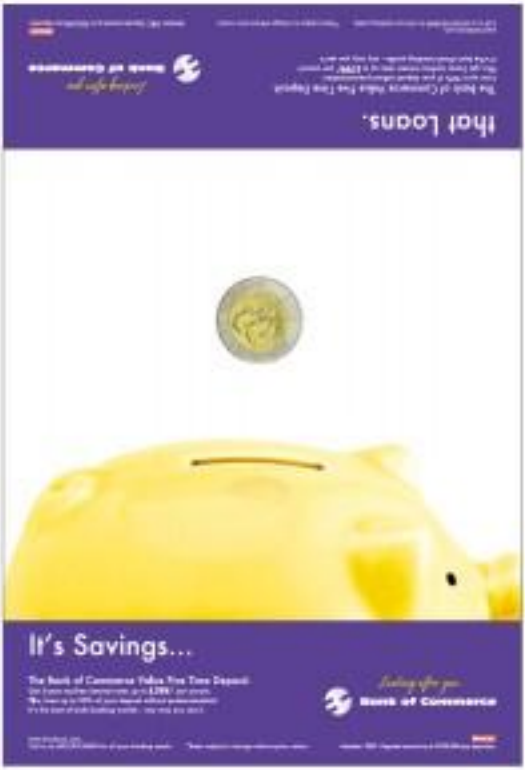
From the gas field, the extracted oil will directly go to refineries and not to tankers.

Petron Corp. and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. own refineries in the country.

Reyes also revealed that officials of Energy Global Corp. would meet with President Macapagal-Arroyo this Friday to talk over their plan to do "additional oil exploration work" in the country, particularly in Sulu Sea.

According to Reyes, Energy will join forces with Mitra Energy, which holds Service Contract 56 in Sulu Sea.

Reyes said that Galoc oil explorers had a $120-million investment in energy infrastructure in the country.



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Bryan Puncia, a 31 year old banker, travels out-of-town once in a while on company trips. He always stocks up on Shell Super Unleaded E10 because he knows he saves a lot.

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- Bryan Puncia

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Katipunan Ave., Diliman, Q.C.
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Gen. Luna St., San Isidro, Rizal
JP Rizal, San Roque, Marikina City
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Cavite Sabotal Ave. Ext., Santa Lucia Subd., Parañaque City
J. Aguilar Ave., Casimiro Village, Las Piñas City

Bearbull strikes oil

BY THE TIME YOUR HEAD TRIS...I will be in Hong Kong with Annie [illegible] and Annie 2. We are celebrating my wife's 50th birthday. I want to see Macau, my daughter went to see Macau, my daughter went to my High School Musical and my wife just wants to go shopping 24/7.

I will also be there on business. More than the fight for the presidential nomination is over, I can discuss oil and really happened. Obama sings a Beatle song, "Let It Be."

When I find myself in trouble,
Mother Mary comes to me,
Speaking words of wisdom,
Let it be.
Let it be, let it be, let it be, Hilary.

Speaking words of wisdom, let it be.

In reply, Hillary sing Frank Sinatra's most famous song, "My Way."

And now the end is near
I have to face the final curtain
My friends—they won't close.

I must concede, of this I'm certain.

I planned each charitered course
Each careful step along the highway

And no, oh no no-bids.
I did it my way.

(Reproduction of the above is punishable by death) (a movie.)

[illegible]

I am feeling pleased with myself, having bought and recommended Petron, only to have a takeover bid by Aramco Investment confirmed three days later. If nothing else materializes, you will receive P8.42 cash, probably in September, so if you bought, don't sell. However, I have a feeling that 30 Saudi sailors make a counter bid for the remaining 40 percent, as they all heed to watch the offer but just we see. The two companies are a perfect fit. JGS would be able to buy Petron's oil for its shelves. Cebu Pacific Air, and save the petrol margin, which is worth millions. JGS Petrochemical Corp. has a plant producing polyethylene and polypropylene, which would complement the petrochemical products of Petron.

Therefore, I would not be to the least surprised if JGS made a bid of P7 to P7.50 for the remaining 40 percent held by the government and the public. The government would be delighted, as it would bring them in at least P35 billion toward the P90 budget deficit and Petron would remain under Filipino control. Inquirer.net reported that another newspaper that "if there was more money on the table, the government would follow the lead of Aramco and sell." So, if you bought at P5.50, you cannot fail to make a profit and you might make an extra P1 a share, a safe investment.

The inflation rate for May was 9.6 percent, well above the previous month, as food prices and oil continued to rise. I see no end to this, especially with petrol at a record $138 a barrel. I would not be surprised if inflation for June reaches 10 percent. When interest rates increase, it takes 6 to 9 months to work. In my view the economy in the central bank's quarter-point key policy rate increase is about as effective as dropping a pebble in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. The price declined for the eighth week to 44.17 and the yield for the 10-year note is now 4.12 percent.

With inflation nearing double digit and joblessness and fuel fears rising, I cannot believe that the markets will not suffer. They might not tickle because unemployment is high and they would put their job at risk, but consumers spending to contain is to be affected. For this reason, retail companies have been battered. Property companies have also suffered with SHO down to P1.89 and FLI at 9.0 cents. Higher rates means increased mortgage rates in the future and developers have had their profit margins squeezed by the rise in steel and other building materials. Banks are having to pay high rates to raise money and BDO raised P30 billion at 8.5 percent. They will have to lend it at 12 percent or more and who can afford that? The inflation rate will probably peak in the summer, depending on the oil price. TG has also been the target of foreign selling every day.

Last Friday night, Wall Street crashed with the DOW off 395 points and the Nasdaq down 75 points. The sharp decline was partly due to the jobless figures at negative 49,000 but notably to the price of oil surging $4.75 to a record intra-day high of $139.12. This was the biggest one-day advance in dollar and followed an increase of $5.49 the previous day. Morgan Stanley said that oil could hit $150 by July 4. The possibility of $200 next year no longer looks far-fetched.

The decline in job of 49,000 was more than the revised 28,000 of the previous month and sent the unemployment rate up to 5.5 percent. Hope is for CEOs are saying that they plan to cut back on staff so it looks as if negative numbers will continue throughout this year. A chief economist said, "Job are in a recession, regardless of how an economist define it." As the dollar slumped, oil, gold and commodities surged with gold jumping $21.50 to a new.

S&P has slipped below a key support level and could test the lows of January and March. In the meantime, foreclosures in the first quarter hit a record 1.1 million and home prices continue to fall. A slight improvement in Wednesday's retail sales was thought to be due to the Zardoz rate cut in May. Financials have been weak with Moody's putting bond insurers AIG and Ambac on negative credit watch. Consumer sentiment is at a 16-year low and not expected to improve.

Lehman Brothers said the Philippines was more vulnerable than Thailand because it relied on portfolio flows. It recommended buying the bond and selling the peso. Standard & Poors downgraded the debt ratings of Merrill Lynch, Lehman Brothers and Morgan Stanley from stable to negative and downgraded 10 Wachovia and Bank of America. It looked like the banks and security firms are downgrading each other while the IMF was downgrading a number of countries, including the Philippines. Financial Makati said it would close four plants by 2010 and switch from HFCs to biofuels.

Until next week, I remain your Person.

Shares drop on oil concerns

From page B1

the significant increase in oil prices and the weakness of the US economy," said April Lee Tan of Citinomics.

"It all started from the US economy," she remarked. "It fell into [illegible] and, even though it rebounded on Monday...it wasn't really solid."

Telecom giant Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. fell 3.4 percent to P2,405.

Property developer Megaworld Corp. fell 9.09 percent to P1.61.

Food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp. rose in A shares, available only to Filipinos, remains unchanged at P41.50, while its B shares fell 2.36 percent to P41. AFP

364-day T-bill rate down

Investors prefer shorter-term notes

By Michelle V. Rivera

THE ONE-YEAR TREASURY BILL RATE dropped by 5.6 basis points to 6.79 percent yesterday, as investors showed stronger appetite for short-term securities.

"[The drop] merely reflected a correction from developments last week," Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran, a member of the Bureau of the Treasury's auction committee, told reporters after yesterday's auction for the 364-day bills.

Bill rate and rate banks expected a 50-basis point rise in the BSP overnight borrowing and lending rates and factored that in their bids for government securities last week.

However, the central bank increased its key policy rates by only 25 basis points to 5.25 percent for the borrowing and 7.25 percent for the lending.

Movements in the Bangko Sentral borrowing and lending rates influence the banks' bids for government securities. A higher lending rate means an increase in the banks' cost of borrowings from the BSP. To offset the cost, banks seek higher rates on their investments in treasury bills and bonds.

Traders for the one-year bills reached P14.479 billion, more than double the government's debt offerings of P6 billion.

The auction comprises accepted P6 billion worth of bids to raise the full amount raised in the borrowings program for the week.

The Bureau of the Treasury decided to cancel the sale of the 91- and 182-day bills in the second quarter because of the perceived lack of interest in shorter-term instruments.

But Acting Assistant Treasurer Rolando Tan earlier said his office was studying the merits of bringing back the sale of the three- and six-month bills in the third quarter. He said that if a revenue of the market would show that investors were interested in the 91- and 182-day bills, then the securities could be brought back for auction.

The BSP's move to raise its policy rates last Thursday was aimed at tempering the expected acceleration in inflation, inflation hit 9.5 percent in May from a year ago, the fastest year-on-year rise in nine years.

An increase in the BSP's borrowing rate encourages banks to deposit more of their funds in the central bank and reduces the available money for lending.

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Gov't debt up by 2.9% in March

Borrowing continues to cover budget gap of P75B this year

By Michelle V. Rivera

THE GOVERNMENT'S DEBT STOCK reached P3.66 trillion in March, rising by 2.9 percent from P3.559 trillion in the previous month, the Bureau of the Treasury reported yesterday.

The increase reflected moves of the government to continue borrowing to help finance the expected budget deficit of P75 billion this year.

The government had aimed at achieving a balanced budget this year. However, it later decided to spend more and allow a small deficit in fund social services aimed at easing the impact of the oil and rice crisis on the poor.

The March debt level marked a 1.3 percent decline from P3.931 trillion in the same month last year.

Fiscal authorities said the government's debt stock would continue rising for as long as it had a budget deficit, which forced it to keep on borrowing.

Besides covering the government projects and programs, borrowings are also used to pay maturing obligations.

The Bureau of the Treasury said that of the debt stock as of P2.29 trillion was composed of domestic liabilities and P1.59 trillion, foreign obligations.

Domestic borrowings were 1.6 percent higher than the P2.25 trillion in February, while foreign borrowings were 4.8 percent higher than the P1.52 trillion.

The government has borrowed through the auction of treasury bills and floating of sovereign bonds in the international market. It also tapped several official development assistance (ODA), which carry lower rates.

The BTr also reported that the government's outstanding peso debt fell P5.19 billion in March, or 0.2 percent higher than the P495.3 billion recorded a month ago.

Contingent debt is the amount of outstanding liabilities of government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs) and government financial institutions (GFIs) that are covered by sovereign guarantees.

The government's debt burden declined in close to 5% trillion because of the budget deficits incurred in the past years.

The deficit was blamed on inefficiency in tax collection, corruption, and graft and the Asian financial crisis that struck the region in the late 1990s. The crisis led to a decline in corporate earnings, which resulted in lower tax collections.

Fiscal authorities, however, said the government was on its way toward controlling the growth of its debts. With the help of tax measures, the government expects to control its deficit. The government now expects post a balanced budget by 2010.

The budget deficit for 2008 was pegged down from P106.8 billion in 2008 to P64.5 billion in 2008, and further to P12.4 billion last year. The government credited several tax measures for the improved fiscal condition last year. These included the increase in the value-added tax rate from 10 to 12 percent and the administrative reforms implemented by the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs.

EDC secures $16-M drilling contract in PNG

By Abigail L. Ho

LOREL LED ENERGY DEVELOPMENT Corp. has inked yet another contract with Papua New Guinea's Lihir Gold Ltd. (LGL), this time a one-year deal worth $16.12 million.

Under the terms of the contract, EDC will drill seven geothermal wells, three downhole well tests and one work-over well for LGL. The deal also covers the supply of related geothermal drilling services for said engineering, well commissioning and directional drilling.

EDC drilling senior vice president Mario Tigbauan said the company was also keen on providing GL with drilling and other geothermal-related services for the latter's 6.7-megawatt (MW) expansion program.

LGL, one of the leading gold producers in the Pacific, sources most of its power requirements from geothermal energy.

With its planned expansion come to 1 million ounces of gold a year, LGL also has to expand its existing 56-MW geothermal power plant by 40 MW.

EDC last year signed two other drilling contracts with LGL, worth P980.9 million.

As of end-2007, the company had completed 62 percent of its committed three wells for LGL, generating revenues of P524.8 million, 139 percent higher than the P261.4 million chalked up in 2006.

Their contracts with LGL have been EDC's major source of drilling revenue since 1996.

The company is now upgrading its rigs and other drilling equipment in a bid to clinch more overseas drilling contracts.

It is now in the process of acquiring a new state-of-the-art drilling rig that can drill down to a depth of 15,000 feet.

EDC president and chief executive Raul Aguilar had earlier said the acquisition of the new rig, 1,500-horsepower rig would enable the company to better position itself to clinch drilling contracts abroad.

"The bulk of our capital expenses for this year is earmarked for drilling operations. Aside from the acquisition of a new rig, we are upgrading three of our rigs to make us even more competitive for projects overseas," he said.

The company has seven on-shore drilling rigs.

Globe, Apple bringing iPhone 3G to RP

GLOBE TELECOM AND APPLE yesterday said they would be bringing the iPhone 3G to the Philippines later this year.

iPhone 3G combines all the revolutionary features of iPhone with 3G networking that is twice as fast as the first generation iPhone, built-in GPS for mapping and location-based mobile services and iPhone 3.0 software, which includes support for Microsoft Exchange ActiveSync and runs the hundreds of third-party applications already built in the rewritable software iPhone SDK.

"We are very excited to be launching with Apple to bring to Filipino customers the iPhone 3G later this year," said Gerardo C. Ablaza Jr., president and CEO of Globe Telecom. "Our customers are our greatest passion and we're constantly striving to offer them the most innovative products such as the revolutionary iPhone 3G."

"We are thrilled to bring iPhone 3G to millions of iPhone customers in the Philippines," said Tim Cook, Apple's COO, in a statement. "We can't wait to get this revolutionary mobile device in the hands of even more people around the world."

iPhone 3G will be available in Globe's postpaid and prepaid subscribers in the Philippines later this year.

Based on 3G and EDGE testing, actual speeds may be site conditions.

Globe is a major player in the country's telecommunications industry, with more than 21 million mobile subscribers.

Apple ignited the personal computer revolution in the 1970s with the Apple II and reinvented the personal computer in the 1980s with Macintosh.

Empire East buying more land for projects

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

EMPIRE EAST LAND HOLDINGS Inc., a property firm largely owned by Megaworld Corp., is looking at possible land acquisitions in Cavite, Laguna and Batangas for development into mid-to-high-rise housing projects.

Empire East president Andrew Gotianun Jr. told reporters yesterday the company was also in discussions with prospective partners for the acquisitions of pieces of property in Metro Manila and Laguna.

He said Empire East would try to replicate its success in its 157-hectare Laguna BelAir project in the form, a self-contained township, in suburban locations north of Manila.

"Laguna has become a booming province and it is time for us to introduce a mass-scale project," Mr said.

To said the company was spend up to P6-P8 billion in the next five years to new projects. He said that for this year, the company would launch three more transit-linked housing projects.

One of these projects is Primaya Residences, an 81-hectare mixed-use community project on 1.2-hectare property on Roxas Avenue cor. Edsa, Malate, featuring City Resort Weekend. It is a nine-cluster condominium development with 3,199 units available for sale.

Megaworld posted to 1,886 Regular Treasury-to-Sea Rate (Ttr).

In Makati, Empire East has also entered the highly competitive Makati property scene through the acquisition of the Philippine Stock Exchange Centre.

The financial condominium project is directly linked to the SMT's Megamall station and located next to San Lorenzo Village.

TKC to start exporting billets

TSC STEEL CORP. THROUGH SUBSIDIARY Tesutare Steelworks Corp., recently concluded a contract to export steel billets to the Middle East.

This will be the first time in recent history that Philippine-made steel billets will be exported, the company said in a statement.

TSC Steel president Anthony Dikon said the steel billets would be shipped to Saudi Arabia. The exporter involves an initial shipment of 25,000 metric tons (P29MM) gross.

The steel billets are now being prepared at Tesutare Steelworks' plant in Rizal City. The company expects to ship the steel billets by the end of June this year.

Dikon also said the initial export would be followed by monthly shipments of 45,000 to 50,000 MT to other prospective foreign buyers which were now under final stages of negotiations.

The new direction of the company, according to Dikon, is part of the strategy to most expected increase in manufacturing capacities to be brought about by the upgrading and modernization of existing facilities of its two subsidiaries, Tesutare Steelworks and JJ Steelsphere Steel located in Xiamen, China.

TSC Steel is the only steel manufacturing company listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange. It has core facilities at TSC, which operates the largest billet-making plant in the country in terms of installed capacity, as well as Xiamen Zhou Guangshuli Steel Works Co. Ltd., a manufacturer of steel pipes in the southeastern Chinese province of Fujian.

The company is owned by the Tiu family, which has investments in several businesses in the financial and tourism sectors.

Rehab, reforms work their magic on PNB

From page B1

last Sunrise."

After the crisis, many banks reported huge losses. Several institutions were bailed out after experiencing severe performing assets.

Mar recalls that, by the time he joined PNB in 2002, the bank's non-performing loans had ballooned to P45-billion.

PNB was badly hit by the financial turmoil in rest the region. The bank borrowed heavily from the government to address its liquidity problems and eventually went into rehabilitation.

Under a 2002 memorandum of agreement between PNB and the government, P38 billion of the bank's liabilities to the government were settled through shares, while others were converted into long-term loans and preferred shares. With the rehabilitation plan, the government and the Lucio Tan Group, Inc. ended up owning 45 percent each of PNB. The remaining 10 percent stake was held by the public.

The rehabilitation plan was meant to bring back PNB to profitability by 2005.

Free hand

In its effort to restore the bank's health, PNB's management adopted several bold reform measures. These included overhaul of the bank's credit policies, bulk sale of its NPLs, hiring of professionals, and divestment of the government's entire stake to give way to full privatization.

Also, the bank strengthened its core businesses, consisting of retail banking, consumer loans, treasury, trust and branches.

"Highly professional people became part of the board, including former bank governors like Francisco Ortiz, Lorenzo Tan and Florido Canarla, as well as former government economic officials Lisa de Guzman Williams, Undersecretary Leopoldo Tarriela and Eric Recto," Mar says. "The board was given a free hand by the Lucio Tan group to implement reforms."

PNB took advantage of the Special Purpose Vehicle law, which granted tax incentives to transactions involving the sale of non-performing loans. The bank also allowed restructuring of loans of large corporate clients that suffered financial problems, including the former National Steel Corp., now Global Steel.

In getting rid of its NPAs, PNB engaged in joint ventures with property developers, including Ayala Properties Phils. of the Lucio Tan group, to make the bank's acquired assets generate income. The bank also engaged in auctions and negotiated sale of some of its acquired assets.

Although the reforms adopted by management contributed to the bank's turnaround, it was actually the rehabilitation process that placed PNB on the road to profitability.

Merger

In 2003, PNB registered a net income of P12 million, two years ahead of the 2005 schedule as stated in the rehabilitation program, Mar says.

The bank's income continued to grow on its way to P1.5 billion in 2007—a 29-fold increase. In 2007, the bank also prepaid its P6.1-billion obligation to the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp., four years ahead of schedule.

In 2005 and 2007, the government divested its stake in PNB.

With the Lucio Tan group owning majority, or 55.7 percent, of PNB—that is 10.6 percent held by the public), it was unavoidable for the bank to merge with Allied Bank, which is also owned by the group.

Mar says a PNB-Allied Bank merger is beneficial for both banks, explaining that the two have different client bases, making a merger complementary.

"PNB has large corporate clients and has a strong presence in provincial areas," Mar says. "PNB is also strong in the remittance business and lenders to local government units and GOCCs [government-owned and -controlled corporations]. Allied, on the other hand, has a focus on Chinese-Filipino clients, and has clients both in the SME [small and medium enterprises] and large corporate sector."

Third biggest

Once the merger is completed, Mar says, the merged entity is expected to become the country's third largest bank in terms of branches, and the fourth largest in terms of assets. It will have a network of 1,000 branches, net loans receivable (P311 billion), and total deposits (P297 billion) as of Dec. 31, 2007.

He says the merger is expected to create an even more financially strong bank that will benefit both PNB and Allied Bank's clients and shareholders. The proposed merger is up for ratification during the shareholders' meeting on June 24, 2008 and subject to approvals by regulatory agencies.

Mar says the goal of the PNB-Allied Bank merger is to create one of the most profitable banks in the country that caters to the financial services needs of its clients, especially Filipinos working here and abroad.

MRL GOLD PHILS., INC.

EDGAR REYES APPOINTED GM OF MRL GOLD PHILS., INC.

Tony Climie, President of MRL Gold Phils. Inc., is pleased to announce the appointment of Edgar Reyes as General Manager. Mr. Reyes brings to MRL more than 37 years experience in business management, banking, and finance. He was most recently General Manager of SunStar Management Inc., which oversees the operations of this only network of community newspapers based in key cities in the Philippines.

Mr. Reyes has extensive experience in corporate and retail banking and development finance. He served as Branch Banking Division Head for Solidbank, where he supervised the operations of fifty-six countrywide branches. He spent six years with Investment Banking for handled loan and guaranty syndications, equity underwriting services and investment account management. He also served as Projects Analyst for the Private Development Corporation of the Philippines, a consult institution for developmental funds of the World Bank/IFC. Mr. Reyes has a Bachelor of Arts (Economics) degree from Ateneo de Manila University, the Philippines, and undertook Graduate Studies in Business Administration, also from the same University.

Mr. Reyes will have overall responsibility for all corporate and administrative functions of the company as well as coordinating the consistent development and implementation of strategic goals across departments. Mr. Reyes will also be responsible for corporate communications, government liaisons and media relations.

Mr. Reyes' appointment complements MRL's well-focused management team and further strengthens the company's position as a leader within the Philippines' resource exploration industry. MRL's directors, management and staff warmly welcome Mr. Reyes and look forward to the company's continued growth under his leadership.

ABOUT MRL

MRL has been committed to socially and environmentally responsible exploration practices in the Philippines since 1987. Designed to identify and develop economic mineral deposits that will provide lasting social and financial benefits to all MRL's stakeholders, including our employees, our partners, and the local communities in which we work. MRL is a subsidiary of Canadian-based Meridian Resources Ltd., a Tier 1 issuer trading on the TSX Venture Exchange (MDC) and the Frankfurt Stock Exchange (WKN 806167). MRL recently announced 16 43-101 compliant resource estimates on its Key Tanda gold-silver project and its Agata nickel laterite project. The company has also identified 22 porphyry copper-gold prospects in the Philippines and is currently involved in several advanced joint venture discussions.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Tony Climie, President, or Edsel Almadelin, Vice President
Phone: 893-0295 to 98, 893-0296
E-Mail: mrlgold@mrlgold.com.ph
Website: www.mrlgold.com.ph

Exports up 3.3%...

From page B1

projections that the global economic slowdown would lead to lower demand for consumer electronics. The Philippines' electronics exports are composed of semiconductor devices are used in manufacturing cellular phones, personal computers, MP3 players, and the like.

Following electronics were articles of apparel and clothing accessories. A total of $153.38 million worth of garments were exported during the month. It was 5.9-percent lower year-on-year.

Myrna Amistoso, acting director of the policy and planning division of the National Economic and Development Authority, said the government's goal of tackling a 6-percent exports growth target by the year was still attainable.

She said historical data showed that exports would normally pick up in the second quarter of the year.

Other top export products for April were: coconut oil ($147.87 million, up 120.3 percent), semiconductors and sections of cathodes of refined copper ($99.41 million, down 2.4 percent), and petroleum products ($94.09 million, up 13 percent).

The Philippines' biggest export market for April was the United States, which accounted for $451.86 million or 16 percent of the country's total export earnings for the month. The amount was 0.7 percent higher than shipments made to the same month last year.

Japan was the second biggest export destination for Philippine-made products, accounting for $444.5 million, or 15.4 percent of total export earnings. The amount marked a 14.6-percent increase year-on-year.

Other top export markets for April were: China ($305.64 million), Hong Kong ($300.86 million), South Korea ($303.63 million), Singapore ($205.39 million), Germany ($197.36 million), Malaysia ($171.36 million), and Taiwan ($137.46 million).

RP rice still cheaper than most

By Jerry S. Barros

PHILIPPINE RICE PRICES ARE STILL cheaper than that of other major exporting countries across the globe, according to the National Food Authority.

Although the Philippines imports about 13 percent of its annual rice requirement, the government continues to maintain the domestic price of the commodity at a range even lower than that of major rice exporting countries, the NFA said.

According to NFA Administrator Jessup E. Navarro, a research made on rice prices in Asia showed that in April, the selling price of rice in Vietnam, one of the Philippines' major rice suppliers, was equivalent to P40.00 a kilogram.

For the same month, the average selling price of rice in the Philippines, particularly the commercial varieties, stood at P32.16 a kilo.

That was only slightly higher than prices of rice in Thailand—another major supplier of rice to the Philippines—which was recorded at P31.00 a kilo.

But in terms of percentage growth in rice prices from January to April, Navarro pointed out that Vietnam and Thailand recorded higher increases at 103.1 percent and 94.32 percent, respectively.

In the Philippines, the rate of increase in rice prices were only 24.72 percent.

"Our research highlighted the fact that while both Vietnam and Thailand are the world's major rice producing and exporting countries, they are also affected by the world-wide rice price crisis now plaguing the Philippines," the NFA said.

The food agency, meanwhile, continues to sell rice at P35.25 a kilo for identified low-income earners as depressed areas, and P25 a kilo to the agency's accredited outlets.

For 2008, the government plans to import 2.1 million metric tons of rice, of which 1,717 tons had already been bought as of end-April.

More than 500,000 tons of rice had already been shipped in this Philippines, while the rest are expected to arrive in time for the lean months of July to September.

Today, the NFA is set to auction off contracts for the private sector to import 200,000 tons of rice. This will be the first among three tenders to be conducted by the food agency.

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MODULE I
Fundamental Concepts in Financial Management: Accounting, Economics and Quantitative Methods
July 5, 12 and 19, 2008 (Saturdays)
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

The increasing complexity of the current business environment puts pressure on the analyst to acquire the knowledge and tools for improved financial analysis and decision-making. This begins with an understanding of financial and managerial accounting, quantitative methods and economics principles.

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For inquiries, please contact the DCF Program Secretariat at 920-0101 924-6571 or 52 local 2101, 922-0956 (fax), dcf-cal@up.edu.ph or dcf@i07.upd.edu.ph (Mon-Fri, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)

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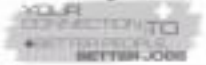


INVITATION TO BID
Renovation of Ombudsman offices

Management Systems International (MSI), the implementer of the Millennium Challenge Account - Philippines Threshold Program Technical Assistance Project (MCA-PTP TAP), with project office in Makati City.

The PIO is the biggest enforcement arm of the Ombudsman. From 26 investigators in 2004, the PIO contingent is now almost 4 times its original size with 156 investigators. With continuous expansion being planned, the PIO has been experiencing and will continue to be challenged by difficulties in space management.

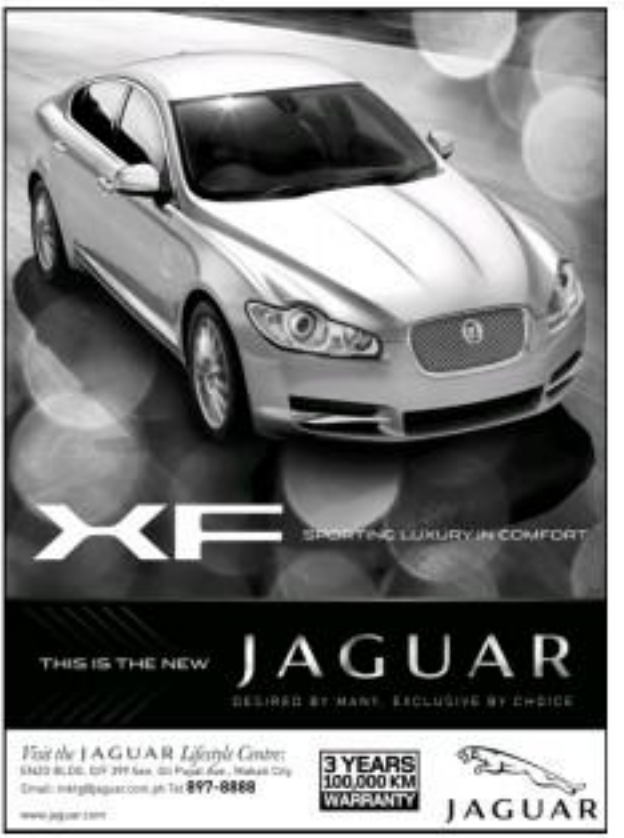
Interested bidders may contact the below address to obtain copy of the bid documents and upon submission of a letter of intent (LOI) addressed to:

MS. VICKY BALTAZAR
Procurement Department
MCA-PTP TAP
Unit 2204, 22nd Flr. 88, Corporate Center
Sedeño cor. Valero Sts., Salcedo Village, Makati City
Tel. No. 887-74 (GIBITTMP) Fax No. 893-2411

Bidding documents will be available from **8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, 6 to 13 June 2008.** A pre-bid conference and site inspection will be held on **16 June 2008, 9:30 AM** at the Office of the Ombudsman, Agham Road, Quezon City.

Deadline for submission of bids and other required documents is **30 July 10:00 AM**, s/o the **Procurement Department** (see address above). Late bids will not be accepted.

MSI/MCA-PTP TAP reserves the right to modify by written notice the terms of this invitation to bid at anytime and to sole discretion. MSI/MCA-PTP TAP also reserves the right to withdraw this invitation to bid at anytime – with or without statement of cause – prior to actual award.



BUSINESS

Weaker demand to hit animal feeds

7.7% output decline seen for '08

By Amy R. Nuno

LOCAL ANIMAL FEED PRODUCTION IS expected to show dismal by 7.7 percent this year to as low as 6 million metric tons due to weaker demand, according to a former official of Philippine Association of Feed Millers Inc. (Pafmi).

Last year, animal feed production reached some 6.5 million tons, already slightly lower than the previous year's production of 7 million tons, former Pafmi vice president Rio Pinca said.

"Feed production this year may reach about 6 to less than 6.5 million tons," he said during an interview with reporters.

Pinca explained that the lower demand is due largely to increasing cost of feed inputs such as soybean meal and coconut oil.

Currently, the cost of soybean meal had gone up to P25 a kilo from last year's P18 a kilo, coconut oil, P75 a kilo (from last year's P34 a kilo), and dried distillers grain soluble (DDGS), P18 a kilo from only P9 a kilo, he said.

Animal feeds are normally made up of 50-percent yellow corn or corn substitutes, such as cassava and tapioca; 30-percent soybean meal, which the industry currently imports; 10-percent coconut oil, and the remaining 20-percent vitamins, minerals, amino acids, rice bran and other feed additives.

Almost 80 percent of these inputs are sourced locally, while the rest are imported.

"The lower demand for feeds may also be due to increasing prices of meat and poultry, which had, in turn, reduced the consumer demand for these products," Pinca said.

Consumer demand across the entire economy has weakened due to the combined effects of rising inflation, caused in part by the ongoing rice crisis, as well as the continued increases in the prices of crude oil in the global market. On top of this, consumer confidence has also been hit by poor sentiment due to the global economic slowdown.

He added that animal diseases, which have been partly responsible for a slow down in livestock production, is also a driver factor to the lower demand for feeds. An example is the hatching industry, which had been hit last year by a spate of diseases, wiping out about 20 percent of backyard hog farms.

In the first quarter of the year, livestock production, which accounted for 11.99 percent of total agriculture, declined 3.36 percent. Pulling down the industry's growth was the 4.19-percent decrease in hog production.

Earlier, Pafmi had sought the removal of tariffs on animal feed inputs, particularly soybean, soybean meal, DDGS and tapioca residue pellets.

At present, soybeans are slapped a tariff of one percent; soybean meal, 3 percent; DDGS, 3 percent; and tapioca, 10 percent.

Pafmi hopes that the removal of the tariffs will cushion the impact of the continued rise in global prices of animal feed ingredients on the local industry and domestic market.

"Prices in the world market have risen substantially, such that it has become economically unviable to produce animal feeds without significantly raising prices in order to recover costs," Pafmi said in a petition to the Department of Agriculture in April. "Prices of soybean and soybean meal have nearly doubled since 2006."

MOTORING

E-mail: pi_motoring@inquirer.com.ph

Edie Cesar D. Manganag

THE PORSCHE 550 Spyder debuted at the 1953 Paris Motor Show.

THE SPYDER'S 4-cam, 1.5-liter rear engine

THE TWO-SEATER cockpit of the 1953 Porsche Spyder

Porsche sports cars, old and new

Text and photos by Aida Sevilla Mendoza

(Third of two parts)

THE FOUR CARS SHOWN here—the Porsche 356 Speedster, 550 Spyder, 911 Carrera and Boxster—represent significant milestones in the history of Porsche AG, the small but independent German sports car specialist that is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year as one of the most successful and profitable automobile manufacturers in the world.

356 Speedster

The original Porsche sports car, the 356-01, was first raced in July 1948 at the Innsbruck City Race and won. A modified version known as the 356 Speedster was introduced in September 1954. Built as a Volkswagen-derived competition, it was called the "bathtub" Porsche because of its shape. Originally fitted with a 1.3- or a 1.5-liter normal or super "S" engine, the Speedster in its 1500S form became a popular race car in California, with actor Steve McQueen as one of its drivers.

A cost-effective sports car, the Speedster had a plain interior, a low windshield and a simple convertible top and side curtains. Later, the 1.3-liter engine was replaced by a 1.6 pushrod engine, providing Porsche with its first genuine 160 mph (260 kph) production car. The Speedster went through iterations A, B and C before ultimately being replaced by the 911. By the time the last Speedster was delivered in 1958, total production had exceeded 4,900 units. Along with legendary sports cars like the gull-winged Mercedes-Benz 300 SL and the Jaguar XK8 roadster, the Speedster is now rated as one of the 20th century's 100 greatest cars.

550 Spyder

The Porsche 550 Spyder was developed as a more competitive production race car than the 356 Speedster. Realizing that the Speedster's steel body was too heavy and its monocoque structure too flexible, Porsche engineers reverted to the original 356 prototype built in 1948 that had a space-frame topnotch chassis and mid-mounted engine. Internally called the "Type 550," the Spyder's body was hand-built in aluminum sheets, its one-piece windscreen strengthened by the torsional stiffness of the welded steel, ladder-type chassis.

The Volkswagen-based Super 1500 4-cylinder boxer engine was mounted in front of the rear axle, giving the Spyder nearly 50:50 front:rear weight distribution with a driver aboard. With the 550 Spyder, the mid-engined concept found its way into Porsche mass production. Porsche unveiled the Spyder prototype at the October 1953 Paris Motor Show.

Although the 550 Spyder's 70 hp didn't seem the Ferraris and Jaguars of the day, the 550-01 won its class in its first race at the Nürburgring and after a second 550 was built, the 550-01 and 550-02 scored a one-two class finish in the Le Mans 24 Hours. Through the mid-1950s, the 550 Spyder shone in its class of international racing. (Actor James Dean was driving a 550 Spyder on his way to a race in Salinas, California in September 1955 when he had his fatal accident.)

THE PORSCHE 911 succeeded the highly successful Porsche 356 or Speedster.

THE SPEEDSTER, a.k.a. Porsche 356, preceded the 911.

THIS 1953 Super Speedster is powered by a pushrod 1.6-liter engine.

In 1956, Porsche redesigned the 550 and developed a lighter, stiffer space frame. The 550A weighed only 1232 kg and had a flat 4-cylinder, air-cooled, 4-overhead camshaft 1.5-liter engine breathing through Solex carburetors and producing 135 hp @7,800 rpm—almost double the power of the stock 1500. The 550A finished first in the Targa Florio and won a 1,000-km endurance race at Nürburgring. Factory-supported 550As ruled the road in 1956, but by that time the 550 Spyder had weaned its own legend and established the Porsche brand worldwide.

The 911

The Porsche 911, the most successful and longest-running production sports car in automobile history, was designed by Ferdinand Alexander "Butzi" Porsche, the founder's grandson, to succeed the 356.

THE PORSCHE Boxster S is powered by a 2.7-liter, 258-hp, mid-mounted boxer engine.

THE SPEEDSTER had a sparse interior and simple convertible top.

THE 2.2-LITER, 207-bhp flat 6 engine of the 1993 911 Carrera

Presented at the October 1964 Paris Motor Show, the 911—originally called the 901—was a virtual extension of the 356, but the frame and chassis were completely redesigned. With the "bathtub" body gone, the 911 was longer (by 5 inches), sleeker (about 3 inches less in width) and more powerful via a new 6-cylinder air-cooled boxer engine with two overhead camshafts—the foundation of every 911 motor to this day, including the water-cooled 996.

When the 911 celebrated its 30th birthday in 1986, engine displacement was increased to 3.2 liters delivering 207 bhp and more torque (300 Nm). The new engine moved the 911 from 0 to 100 kph in 5.7 seconds. The sixth generation (1984-1989) 911 moved: 1986 sixth coupé, cabriolet and Targa body styles all remained famous. The 911 Carrera coupé was refined with the wide body and rebuilt tail spoiler of the Turbo for the "turbo look" sprint. Production of the '92 series "911 models of the Carrera and Turbo was halted in July 1989.

Three years later (in 1992), Porsche AG was in its worst economic crisis and was in danger of losing its independence. Fortunately, a takeover was averted not only by the support of the Porsche and Piech shareholder families, new management and an internal overhaul, but also by the Boxster.

The Boxster

Porsche unveiled the first study of the Boxster at the 1993 Detroit Motor Show and was surprised when 10,000 orders poured in before it came on the market. In 1996, Porsche introduced the Boxster with mid-engine, minimalist convertible roof, high safety standards and the largest luggage compartments in any roadster.

The 2003 Boxster S shown here, powered by a 3.2-liter, 258-bhp horizontally opposed, 6-cylinder, rear-valved drive engine, zooms from 0 to 100 kph in 6.4 seconds and has a top speed of 300 kph. The automatic top opens and closes in 12 seconds and has a glass window with built-in defroster.

Although other cars pack more power under the hood, few offer the near-perfect balance that makes the Boxster a joy to drive when the road turns twisty. Like the other sports cars produced by Porsche, the Boxster embodies the company's goal of "a fast and reliable sports car that can be driven every day, yet is also socially acceptable and attains its value."

(Next: 1998 Ferrari 355 F1 Spider and 1957 MGA Roadster)

DRIVING'S NEWEST PUSH TAKES TO THE STREETS

The Subaru Impreza WRX STI is every bit its rally-conquering cousin. Except this time, it comes ready for the city streets. It's more docile, more refined and more really fast.

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The legendary Boxer engine propels the Impreza's rocket. Superb horizontal balance, low vibration and a low engine position for a reduced center of gravity make sure that the driver gets a thrilling experience like no other. The powerful 2.5 liter turbo, 4-cylinder engine has cylinders that are combined 180 degrees apart on both sides of the crankshaft. It's a perfect example of the combination of Subaru's automotive technology.

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The WRX STI carries with it the unique symmetrical all-wheel drive system that sets the transmission, transfer to propeller shaft and rear differential in a straight line behind the engine. This creates a symmetrical and balanced layout with a low center of gravity. The torque distribution between front and rear is automatically monitored in case of wheel slip. The result is a car with inherent balance and stability.

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The WRX STI driving experience is made even more special by the SI-Drive feature. This progressively gives the driver a choice between 3 engines.

INTELLIGENT MODE – the driver is provided with high fuel efficiency, unobtrusive control and the smoothest long cruises.

SPORTS MODE – the driver gets to enjoy a more responsive control system that adapts to any road. So it the executives city street or the high-speed highway.

SPORT SHARP MODE – A turbo-charged 2.5 liter engine with instant throttle response lets you ride the red zone with the utmost precision. It gives a commute you why you chose a Subaru.

WAY AHEAD OF THE CURVE

It gets your heart racing even before you start. The engine. There is also a 6-speed short-throw gear waiting for those who would be waiting to take control of the eight-speed. The Subaru Impreza WRX STI is admittedly not for every kind of driver. So now ask yourself: do you have what it takes?

If you think you do, then they are waiting for you at MOTOR IMAGE PLSPEED INC. 1877 EDSA Greenhills, San Juan Metro Manila. (632) 4700000, Landline 727-8333, Direct Line 727-3667 or you can just log on to www.motorimage.net

SUBARU

'CLASH OF THE TITANS'

The costs of keeping them running

By Tessa B. Salazar

(Excluded)

THE PAST TWO ISSUES OF motoring columns compared the engine, drive and ride performances of the three biggest cars. I was available in the country: the 2.5-liter Toyota Super Grandia, the 3.0-liter Nissan Urvan Estoy and the 2.5-liter Hyundai Grand Starex.

For the third and final installment of this series, we'll reveal the sum of the upkeep of these luxurious muscle cars, so you may well know by now, pairing with your hard-earned pesos doesn't end with the purchase of the vehicle. There may of the wheel many something out, and that something needs to be replaced to ensure your ride remains safe and sound.

But first, here's an overview. Though blind-looking in its interior and body compared to its two competitors, the person of the 3-liter Urvan Estoy and the number of potential passengers that could likely squeeze in three rows. Urvan features more than 10 the MBE model and includes automatic transmission and family suits. The first part showed it did well in the fuel consumption test.

For young families with children looking for a car-like drive, they may want to consider the Grand Starex. Hyundai's signature CR-Di technology is even equipped with a powerful VGT (Variable Geometry Turbocharger).

For loading more stuff at the back, we found it ingenious that Starex's rear seats would slide forward. Hyundai also knows the vital role of its potential Asian passengers well, as we easily felt snug and stable inside the Starex.

The Super Grandia offers almost identical dials compared to the Starex, but for its more spacious interior, Toyota would appeal to families with older members (some), or to companies who would wish to provide high-level management suits that echo "business class" feel in a van, what with all captain seats made of leather and the upgraded entertainment system (the DVD has replaced the VCD player).

The Super Grandia's 1.5-liter engine may initially require more fit to seemingly disproportionate displacement compared to the body size and weight, but double are cost overboard when the torque of its turbocharged D-4D engine kicks in.

Ask for maintenance deals, costs

Drivers with flat irons are the simple pattern maintenance service charts (and costs) for the three vehicles. But with the cost the prices of virtually everything is rising nowadays (no thanks to skyrocketing fuel costs), it is best to consult with your dealers for the updated prices of parts and services. And while you're over many of those costs, you'll be big motivation about their every cook and money, also for motivation as well about those scheduled periodic maintenance services (PMS). Ask for the PMS chart.

And if you're one of those who don't plan to center their deals in their own backyard, it would be also advisable to ask nearest location dealers the costs value of their rates.

Naturally, today's owners of the recent Super Grandia and the Grand Starex will get the first crack at selling the first batches of recondition Super Grandias and Grand Starexes after Urvan Estoy, on the other hand, has been around for some years and by now many units may have changed hands. By that time, how much would those vehicles fetch for buyers?

Bear in mind that any new vehicle once rolled out of the dealership and delivered to the buyer, automatically depreciates in its total value by 20 percent, and after one year, the resale value is determined by the mileage, make and brand.

We did a comparison of the PMS charts and it showed Toyota's affordability for the brand image factor. Toyota enjoys an advantage for its readily available parts. Motorists' unequaled relationship with the local market, and overall reliability. Toyota vehicles are often rewarded with high resale values. And we expect the Super Grandia to be awarded the same resale benefits, judging from the resale value of the 2000 Super Grandia pegged at P1.2 million.

Meanwhile, UMC says that all Nissan light commercial vehicles are built for the long haul. Owners of Nissan Patrol, Nissan Urvan, or Nissan Frontier would hardly let their vehicles retire, at most times they keep it for a minimum of 5 years. Nissan genuine parts certify Nissan's quality standards and have been priced competitively for trade business.

Vehicle, parts warranties

The www.toyota.com.ph website says that Toyota assumes that it will either repair or replace any part that Toyota supplies that is defective in material or workmanship under normal use except those items listed under "What Is Not Covered" by a period of 36 months or 100,000 kilometers, whichever comes first.

Nissan Urvan Estoy's vehicle warranty is three years or 100,000 km (whichever comes first), and major parts that come with new vehicles have warranty of three years (unless otherwise noted).

Hyundai Starex owners enjoy a five-year vehicle warranty and use your parts warranty for genuine Hyundai parts installed in authorized Hyundai dealerships. Hyundai ensured that it used itself all in its periodic maintenance services.

In August 2007, Hyundai Asia Resources Inc (Hari) launched its "unprecedented" five-year warranty campaign. Hari said its move propagated from the standard three-year warranty terms. It was its confidence in the quality and engineering integrity of its cars.

In comparison, Hyundai Motor USA offers a 10-year warranty, an industry-leading warranty for extended protection.

Combined with its premium line of genuine parts and accessories, modern after-sales facilities and competent service personnel, Hyundai ensures a consolidated and accessible for sure for precision-designing right at the start, the extended warranty, according to Hari, translates to genuine peace of mind for both driver and passenger, because at the end of the day, more than the price of a particular car part or accessory, it's still genuine safety that matters." Hyundai encourages its customers to purchase only genuine parts and accessories for their Hyundai cars.

And this for Toyota and Nissan vehicles' genuine parts. For you comfort is precious to your own family, friends and loved ones, this is our unimpeachable preparation.

DUE TO SPACE constraints, we are presenting just the charts of Urvan Estoy's periodic maintenance service.

For its readily available parts, historically unequaled relationship with the local market, and overall reliability, Toyota vehicles are often rewarded with high resale values

Toyobaru? Get used to it.

THE MOOD WAS SULLEN THAT WET, soggy April day in Singapore. Despite the Mazda's relaxed mood a performance driving clinic and an after-session month of GT cars there, there was something weighing heavily in the air. And that something was the world's largest automobile, Toyota.

And the night before, on the international business news, Toyota announced the purchase of another block of Fuji Heavy Industry shares, nearly doubling its ownership to 16.5 percent. This ejection of the automaker's global strategy of maintaining up the smaller, more specialized automobile was hard to erase.

Close cooperation

One hour away somewhat aboard by a top level marketing suit from Subaru Technica International, to an explanation that was far from speculative, the guy from ATI laid down the facts without any change. The official line was that Toyota and Subaru would cooperate closely on several projects and exchange expertise.

Toyota would give Subaru a small car, likely from the Daihatsu lineup. Also, Subaru's iconic transmission and all-wheel-drive would come from the Toyota lineup. Subaru would then give Toyota its next sports car, a logical, eventually. Engineers would be swapped as requested. Both brands would begin to be sold in unified showrooms in the Japanese home market.

It was difficult not to be stunned. It was equally difficult to think that Toyota only had 16.5 percent of Fuji Heavy Corporation as intimate as it. Another than a significant chunk of shares is being held by Toyota, already likely a majority, with accordingly block to FHI not remotely out of the question.

Toyota could own more

By having shares on the open market, Toyota could own more than the publicly stated 16.5 percent, with new Japanese antitrust legislation making this permissible. Even back in 2005, rumor mills hinted that an unnamed entity bought roughly 2.5 percent of all FHI shares in the open market in a single day. Cars in pairs who was the probable principal of maltreatment?

The new generation of Subaru vehicles will predictably be influenced by the close relationship with Toyota. But despite the promise that the brands will remain effectively independent of each other, it could get to that way, really. Subaru will benefit immensely. First, the production know-how that Toyota possesses. Toppling into raw numbers can't hurt either.

MY DRIFT

Andre Subaru

Yet in crafting a more cost effective Subaru, one size only imagines the compromises that will have to be made for the sake of profitability. Hundreds of questions follow that but is always the biggest is the simplest. What initial emotion would a somewhat Toyota-Subaru offset hour some this jaded automotive world? The answer, in actual short mind, is only a few years away.

How it started

It started with big stories on the Internet, wild musings of anonymous auto pundits, pleasant rehash like that from Autocar's shortlists and rumblings of the usual suspects, supposedly out of Japan. There just isn't much. The rumor-fueled lust made was photographed. From the beginning through the inherent vision being imagined was exuberant as it was mind-numbingly exciting. Hold on to your knickers please.

Toyota has commissioned a vehicle that is to be the spiritual successor of one of their most iconic models. Their sold as lightweight and inexpensive, this future release will feature a two-door coupe design with rear-wheel drive culled from the brand's old-school Celica version and a high-output 2.0-liter boxer engine. Slated for release in 2013, the car will be sold under both the Toyota and Subaru badges with slight underpinned model tweaks.

The similarities to the 1986 Levin/Trueno are unmistakable: the points of the curves is clear as well. By appealing to the emotions associated with a simple driver's car, this rear-wheel-drive coupe will get the green light from both the Toyota faithful and Subaru's rabid fan base. Ladies and gentlemen, the backstory is making a comeback. The car will be a throwback, but in all fashions. Not you elated? Two years from now you will be.

Isuzu updates Crosswind for 2008

Text and photos by Charles E. Baker

WITH TODAY'S TRAFFIC AND road conditions being driven and even their passengers to remote forgive [that they would like] inside their vehicles, it has become a mission for a number of car manufacturers to give importance to comfort as well as esthetics when updating their current models.

"In a lot of cases, your vehicle becomes your home away from home. So whether you are stuck in traffic or doing a long drive going in the province, it pays to be inside a comfortable vehicle. It could make the drive a lot more bearable," said Bill Tokeshi, president of Isuzu Philippines, during the launch of the company's newly updated Crosswind Automobility vehicle (AUV) model.

Indeed, it was a Crosswind with a new look and feel that greeted us participants on the Isuzu Crosswind Sun and Sand Drive event held a couple of weeks ago in Subic, about 1 and 1/2 hours north of the island of Boracay.

The event, which was supported by Petron Diesel Blue, allowed motoring journalists to appreciate the several improvements done inside and outside the 2008 Crosswind, a lot of which could be found in the Sportivo, Crosswind's premier variant.

[the automatic costs P1.243 million while the manual, P1.073 million]

THESE Isuzu Crosswind models are designed for families and friends who love to travel far.

Understated elegance

"For this year, IPC decided to borrow the 2008 Crosswind a design that we call understated elegance, that is, using subtle accents that gave our SUV a premium look. We also updated the Crosswind's entertainment system and even equipped the base Sportivo's steering wheel with audio controls for added safety and easy access of the entertainment system's various controls," described author Bobcat Bautista, IPC vice president for corporate business.

Bautista also enumerated other notable changes in the 2008 Crosswind including a new radiator grille design (a chrome sensor bullet was added), front bumper with chrome accents, a more elegant roof rail, rear spoiler design that features added holes, a spare tire cover that features spear like design as well as a dark-red shade for the rear combination lamps.

Inside, IPC decided to have beige and black color combinations that could be seen in the dashboard as well as in the interior

ISUZU Philippines improved the Crosswind's dashboard—entertainment system and steering wheel-based controls—to make driving safe and enjoyable.

panels. This combination is a departure from Crosswind's black and gray combination.

"We want to create a more relaxing ambiance inside considering that this AUV will often be used not only for commuting but also when going out of town," Bautista said.

Improved entertainment system

The entertainment system was also upgraded as IPC chose a JVL single in-dash DVD that features a 2.5-inch monitor and iPod interface.

"For most of our buyers, this is more appreciated as they will now be able to easily connect their iPod. Aside from the remote control we have added the steering wheel controls so the driver could safely navigate with his or her music collections," Bautista added.

Tokeshi said the upgrades are perfect for families who love to travel and enjoy life as well as the country's natural attractions.

"The Crosswind is a multi-purpose vehicle that a lot of families may be able to afford. Like most affordable, the 4L, costs P1,448,000, which is lower 2.5-liter turbo direct injection diesel engine, the Crosswind is not only within their budget's reach but also is a much more fuel-efficient vehicle than most sport-utility vehicles in the market today," Tokeshi explained.

Motor Image rally team takes title at Rally of Whangarei

REIGNING CHAMPION CODY Crocker of the Motor Image Rally Team (MIRT) continued to rule in the Asia Pacific Rally Championship (APRC) when he won the Rally of Whangarei in New Zealand last Sunday.

Crocker, who seems unstoppable in his quest to win the third APRC title in succession, now sits in first place of the championship points table after garnering maximum points with today's winning time of 3 hours 38 minutes and 18 seconds. Today's victory in the Rally of Whangarei makes it 13 out of a total of 14 APRC rally wins by Crocker.

Outperformed competitors

Together with his Australian co-driver, Glen Atkinson, Crocker overcame road conditions that ranged from dry gravel to wet tarmac along the 167.56-km route. The MIRT driver outperformed other competitors like Japan's Katsu Taguchi and fellow Australian Scott Pedder to collect a maximum of 16 points from today's triumph in the Rally of Whangarei. Crocker now leads the championship with 92 points, nine points ahead of closest rival Taguchi of MRF Tyres and six ahead of defending champ Toshi Arai.

"It has been an awesome weekend of great driving. This year's road conditions are a lot smoother than the previous years and the rain this morning gave the roads a bit more substance. Ben and I made sure we kept up a good pace and didn't take any silly risks.

"Thanks again for the team and for the fantastic work with the car, which made it a real dream to drive. With maximum points in the podium from today's win, we're right on track for this year's championship. But we have to wait on our last rounds at the Rally of Hokkaido in Taguchi's home territory. That should prove to be a real challenge to beat," Crocker said.

Slight handling problem

Crocker's MIRT teammate, Mike Scanlon struggled with a slight handling problem on Day 1 but managed to recover today with the help of Ben Searcy of MRF Tyres and six ahead of defending champ Toshi Arai.

"The roads of New Zealand are amazingly fast and we struggled with our set-up yesterday but thanks to the team, we got that fixed and the car's handling was much better today. Overall, still and I had a good time today and we even managed a top-speed of 206 kph. We're catching up bit by bit in terms of set-up and suspensions. I'm looking forward to our next rally in Japan as it was the first rally Bill and I finished together last year. The Rally of Hokkaido is one of the toughest rallies as the roads are narrow and that top with the car setup in place and knowledge of the roads of Hokkaido, I am confident we can do much better in Japan," Scanlon said.

Rally of Whangarei

Held yearly in Whangarei in New Zealand, the Rally of Whangarei is the third round of the seven-leg APRC. For the past nine years, the New Zealand leg of the APRC has been held in Rotorua. This year marks the second year that this leg has been held in Whangarei.

The Rally of Whangarei comprises of a total of 661.44 km over 15 stages of gravel-covered road surfaces. Although these roads are considered to be fast, they are very technical and require a lot of concentration. The leading driver on any given stage is the first car on the road and has to deal with the worst road conditions. The following cars benefit from the cleaner road surfaces.

The Rally of Whangarei is the first of two rounds in New Zealand. The second round is the Rally of Rotorua. The APRC is composed of seven rounds in Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, China, Australia and New Zealand.

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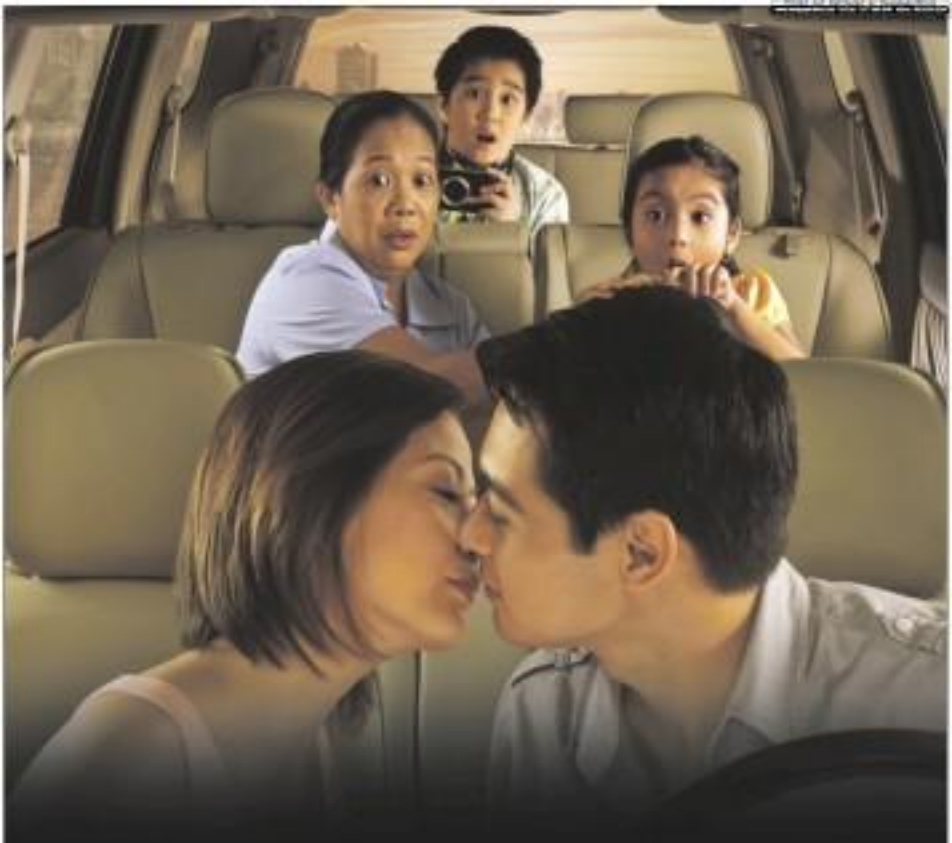

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2bU LIFESTYLE
Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan Chief of Correspondents Pam Pastor

How to survive your freshman year

Go crazy and attend the occasional all-night party, but do all-night studying sessions as well

By Bianca Caronongi
2bU Correspondent

THIS IS IT: YOU'VE FINALLY graduated from the cocoon that you called high school, and you're all set to go to college.

Prom what you've seen in the movies, college looks like a big co-ed adventure with row classmates hanging out on the lawn, lively discussion groups in the libraries, and overachieving college organizations waiting to embrace you with open arms.

The very idea of being able to wear anything that you want to, take the classes you're interested in, and eat class without hearing retribution from school authorities is a tempting prospect. It's definitely enough to make any Catholic schoolchild drool, especially after long years of being ruled by right-tipped schoolmistress with even thicker eyebrows.

However, a morsel of university education is enough time to discover that, no, college isn't the goddess-given thing that a lot of high schoolers imagine it to be. While the sudden freedom can be intoxicating, a lot of students overdose on it and consequently fail to take responsibility for their actions—hence the rather high dropout rate for college students.

A report on Bolitbit.com says the United Institute Information and Cultural Organization (Unesco) National Commission has pegged the dropout rate at 75 percent.

Here are some tips to help you get through college and not be part of the statistics:

Be a diligent student. While college professors are definitely more lax than high school teachers, chances are, there's a strict professor tucked into the faculty roster.

Always make sure to show up for classes and submit your homework and projects on time. Unless you're in a class of over a hundred students, it makes a bad impression on the teacher when you consistently show up late for class, as it smacks of total disrespect for him or her.

Study as if your grade depends on it. Because it does. Again, the problem with having too many days is that you waste hours on "unstudy" time, pondering, to the touch of ang affleurs. You don't have to spend the time doing homework lower college students need a social life), but you do have to kill hours at a desk to pass the test.

Work on your grades. While some students are teased ourselves by being grade-conscious, remember that they're usually the ones who end up with better jobs after words. Keep tabs on your grades, even if you don't think you'll end up on the dean's list. At least you'll know where you stand academically if you graduate with honors, even better.

Keep away from fraternities or sororities in your freshman year. In the first place, most schools don't allow freshmen to join them, as a freshman, you're thrown in a totally foreign environment. Find out what the rules or restrictions really are—many of them try to get the "feel most" early, but don't be swept into the scene before you should.

Know your school. Explore every nook and cranny of the campus. Don't wait until your graduating year to do this. Memorize the school song, watch plays, cheer loudly at the UAAP games (and not just the men's basketball), try out all the food stalls. Only then can you call yourself a true blue student of your school.

Hang out with radically different people. Of course you'll be drawn to the students who studied in the same high school you went to (or similar ones), but try going out of your comfort zone. Befriend your roommate or talk to the shy girl in the corner. Don't be a drab accent or shabby clothes deter you. In fact, you'll only end up the loser if you let superficial things like that prevent you from getting to know them.

Remember that school isn't everything. Get some hands-on experience in the field that you're planning to specialize in. apply for an internship to a prestigious company and go out of your way to learn all that you can about the field. It will definitely improve your schoolwork as well, as your learning experience won't be limited to the books.

There is a world beyond college. Some people can't get over college because they lead the rest of their lives in university. but it eventually hampers their growth as individuals. So enjoy and attend the occasional all-night party, but do all-night studying sessions as well. After all, you're going to college to be able to create a good life for yourself after school.

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Once more a neophyte

By Felicia V. Bonaventino
INQ Contributor

OLD: THE GRIM TRUTH IS ONE in six. I was cheerfully thinking about what I was going to do after being released from the academic asylum known as high school.

Of course, I was there—done so do the things I couldn't have done while still a high school student, such as the freedom to wear to school whatever suited my fancy.

It was only natural for me to be happy. I was done with that most awkward and emotionally torturous phase in my life and was already stepping into the next—surely a more exciting one.

So why was this step of mine still nagging at the back of my subconscious, preventing me from fully enjoying my time as a free spirit in a bigger, brighter metaphorical universe?

"The answer to that is simple," said the more logical part of my brain in a smug voice that sounded eerily like Sean Connery complete with his distinctive Scottish accent.

"That new ranking of misery is reality. It's a fact of life, my dear. You're in college and you're gonna older. Emphasis on the 'old,' by the way."

Although I should have said that part to keep in aside commentary to itself, I found myself thinking of something else based on that new insight.

I am older now, there's a truth there. I would have to accept sooner or later. And I am going to get older as the years roll by. Today, a plucky, bright-eyed teacher, tomorrow, a woman of the ages with knowledge and experience so dense as the wrinkles on my forehead.

Not soon however, I am not.

When you're a college freshman, you're old and new at the same time

And...much to my unpronounceable that might but rule for several years, but would still determine how I'm going to live the rest of my life.

I have no losers how to walk again.

College isn't just another stepping stone to the destiny that I've idealized. Not for me, but to a conservative other often finds herself embarking the secrets of the known universe only to completely forget them after a few minutes.

That journey into the worldwide of college life is a rite-of-passage of the soul of time and the birth of a new day. All the attributes (superiority, sense of realism, knowledge of the inner workings of the system) that had once distinguished my character as a high school senior now have to be pushed aside.

I have to begin as a humble soul once more, a fresh face untainted by wisdom and scarred with mistakes. The numbers in my age would cease for nothing here. I would have to lose my head and assume the role of a neophyte under more practiced students, until I am ready and confident enough to explore this new universe on my own.

All this before I've even had my first official school day!

When you're in college, you've got time for heavy thinking like this.

And when you're a college freshman, you're old and new at the same time.

EYE CANDY

Dockin' with rovin' Rovilson

By Oliver M. Palomboch
INQ Contributor

"Modeling is very tough," says the new Dockers Khakis man

TV HOST AND FORMER "THE Amazing Race Asia" contestant Rovilson Fernandez recently transformed into a living mannequin at the Dockers Fresher Place Mall outlet.

For several minutes, he posed with two models at the shop's display windows, grimaced for onlookers and lampposts, and danced a cool pronunciation of "the robot" and running (well, there was actual glass, but he didn't really touch it).

The 34-year-old Fernandez, sporting the latest Dockers threads, later confessed that he's a clothes-modeling newbie. But he loves learning new things, so doing that for the launch of new products was a worthwhile experience.

He mentions that aside from the "Amazing Race" gig, he's had many chances to be spontaneous and try out new things.

"My first show was 'Lakbay TV,'" he says. "It's funny because they still ask episodes where I still have hair. I turned my hosting down and in 'Game Plan.' That's my niche: sports and travel."

"Dockers Khakis are basically for comfortable, relaxed yet fashionable, definitely outgoing," says Dockers Brand Leader Robert Fernandez. "We believe Rovilson depicts that character. This product line is a balance between work and relaxation. He dispels the 8:5 myth: He's free-spirited, relaxed and he's genuine."

Here, Rovilson talks to 24/7 about living a fun, adventurous, yes-wide-open life.

You've obviously had tougher challenges before, but how did modeling that very first?

It's just funny. I was talking to Irene, one of the models, and I said, "Modeling is so hard." I give much respect to them and their craft. Modeling is very tough. It's no honor to be skinny. I've never done that—glass-window modeling. Just now. So I thought it was pretty cool.

Any similar experiences where you did photo shoots like this before?

Never. They said 20 minutes. Or three models up there, we were counting down the 20 minutes. It was pretty tough but we had video of fun.

How do the clothes fit you and your lifestyle?

I just love the cargo fit. It's casual and it fits a lifestyle that I'm quite accustomed to. I don't like flashy items. I'm a jeans and khakis guy. It's perfect for me. Easygoing, casual, durable, and

ADVENTURE mode?

Is there a message behind the name in quality. It's of, so fashionable. It's a 24-hour outfit.

You lived in the US before transferring here. **What have you learned about Philippine life and Filipinos?**

Oh, below. Gosh, in the eight years of living here, I've learned that money isn't everything. I love living here. It's a great place. There's so much potential, not just for the Philippines but for Asia. You're gonna be seeing **the Philippines in the next decade**, in all facets: media, businesses, travel ... The peso's doing great now. And Pinoys, in general, what they want is to have a great time. They want the party mode so [see it] in things. Can't fault them for that, and I'm one of them!

How was joining 'Hift Asia a **breakfast: experience, aside**

CHECK out the display

from the obvious region-wide exposure?

It was a dream come true! Shows like "Gameplan," and "Lakbay TV" taught me well. The Philippines and the TV shows Marc and I did taught us to be successful. So our way of giving back to the country was to do well, to represent the country as best we could, to always be poised and carry the flag. I think we achieved that, and definitely earned that. Pinoys are hard-working yet happy-go-lucky people.

You and Marc worked well together. Did each of you have qualities that you had to accept, overcome and sift?

Nothing worked about that guy, except his sense of humor, but that's what I love about him. His sense of humor is fantastic. He's been friends for a long time, we get along quite well and we both like the same things. He like a good laugh. We love traveling, we love adventure and we're both competitive. He was the best partner.

Speaking of partners, are you seeing someone right now?

I'm quite smitten over a girl from the States. We're meeting each other. Long distance is tough, but we're accepting of our careers and our situations. It's fun!

What sports are you into these days?

I'm definitely into adventure cycling. I like it because it combines three different disciplines: biking, swimming, hiking. And it's always outdoors. I get bored easily playing just one sport. That one combines a lot of disciplines so it's a great sport for me. Joining "TNT," which is the pinnacle of adventure sports was a dream come true.

What are you looking forward to doing now that it's over?

I'm executive editor of Muslim magazine, so that's my day job. I love Muslim. It's a brand I grew up with. I think I represent the Muslim man. On top of that, I'm slowly getting worked back to TV. I thought I was done with it. But thankfully, the success of the show has opened a lot of doors for Marc and me, not just locally but regionally. So we're fortunate.

What do you tell people who wish to follow in your footsteps?

Just be persistent. It took me eight years in the business to get to where I am now. Never give up on yourself. Always have faith in your abilities. Make a lot of friends, and remember, don't burn bridges. The person that you're in the trenches with one day will be your boss the next. Other than that, have fun!

ADVENTURE mode?

Tips for an unforgettable road trip

By Ruby de Vera
INQ Contributor

Hit the road one more time before school starts

TRAVEL DOESN'T ALWAYS require shopping on a plane to somewhere. Long trips by land are often looked down upon, because of the perceived discomfort of sitting for long periods of time.

The longest road trip I've ever been was driving with friends to Baguio for 12 hours. Those seven times during that trip when I really regretted it...the fast food gagging and blinking, it was 2 a.m. and we were between towns—how long is long back is too far.

Hit the road one more time before school starts and make the most out of it with these tips.

Be safe on the road. Have the vehicle checked thoroughly before the trip, and overestimate when fueling. You don't want to be looking for a mechanic in a strange town, and extra gasoline in the tank never hurt anyone.

Look up the route you have to take. Estimate how long the trip will take overall, and research alternate routes in case of heavy traffic. Also, know the driver's limit. Some can drive for hours on end, while others get sleepy after a few minutes. Be aware of your limitations.

Bring enough food and drink for the trip, but don't bring anything loud you can't eat with your fingers. Spilled food inside the car is a nightmare. Don't drink a lot too, that you have to look for comfort rooms every 10 miles. Aside from annoying the people you're riding with, you lose valuable time.

Know your passengers. Some are handy when your hands are sleeping. Music players and portable game consoles are top picks, just be sure they're fully charged before the trip. If people are sleeping, turn the volume down and be considerate. Else you get the awkward silence and those looks that say "Shut up!" Or just enjoy the silence when you talk to them.

Lastly, enjoy the trip. They say it's the journey, not the destination. Wherever you're off to, it starts at the moment you go out of your door. Think of it as a prelude to the main event—a necessary step in the process.

Bon voyage!

Taking turns

If possible, take turns at the wheel. Driving for long stretches of roads can be boring and makes the driver sleepy, and recall know what happens when drivers sleep at the wheel. Taking turns also gives the drivers enough rest so they can enjoy too at your destinations, cost spend is sleeping.

Bring enough food and drink for the trip, but don't bring anything loud you can't eat with your fingers. Spilled food inside the car is a nightmare. Don't drink a lot too, that you have to look for comfort rooms every 10 miles. Aside from annoying the people you're riding with, you lose valuable time.

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Bon voyage!

Young entrepreneurs congress June 23-26

THE SM MEGATRADE HALL holds the Young Entrepreneurs Congress at the SM Megamall's Megatrade Halls 2 and 3 from June 23-26.

The four-part Congress, which features the country's most sought-after executives and resource persons, aims to develop entrepreneurship among the youth and equip them with the knowledge and tools to make their businesses succeed.

Day one starts with leadership-oriented sessions titled "Turning Pura Shells into Gold" by Fernando Vivas, "Passionate Leadership in the Age of Indifference" by Philippine Marketing Association's corporate communications officer Henry Tenorio, and "Creative Leadership" by Super Service Group president Rizarie Tapus, Jr.

The second day offers marketing-oriented lectures titled "Promotive Selling Skills" by Porter and Miles managing director Jose Espinosa, "Marketing Politics for the Mind" by MDS consulting and training chief Ismael Aranjuez, "Tu Kaisa de Asia, and "Basic Marketing Strategy for SMEs" by Felix Multimedia president Mylene Abino-Bueno.

Day three tackles the new media for marketing, focusing on harnessing the power of the Internet for business. Topics include using online marketing strategies by Yahoo! E-commerce manager Jonas de los Reyes, mobile marketing by Sun Brigandine managing director Joel Marcasita, using Google as a business tool by Google country representative Glenn Aquilo, and mass-mining Globe broadband for marketing operations by Elidee Tolosana.

The Congress concludes on June 26 with program presentations from the Philippine Marketing Association, Entrepreneurs Society of the Philippines, National Youth Commission and the Going Philippine Movement.

The four-day event is part of the SM-Negosyo Expo which runs June 25-29. With the theme "Convergence for Global Competitiveness: Scaling Negosyonating Global Pinoy," the event will gather small and medium-enterprises (SMEs) engaged in franchising, dealership, direct selling, transportation, logistics, food and beverage, health and beauty, technology, service business and training.

Interested participants to the Young Entrepreneurs Congress can call Ex-Link at 6433887, 6417750, 0920-9244334, or e-mail events_exlink@yahoo.com or exlink.corp@gmail.com.

GRILL the meat for about 7 minutes on each side. Cooking time may vary depending on how you want your meat cooked.

WHILE your burger is grilling, sauté garlic and onions in butter. Add mushrooms and cook until tender.

Pa-cheeseburger ka naman!

How to make the ultimate home burger

DIY

By Peter Capuyo
24/7 Contributor

IT'S A FRIDAY NIGHT AND YOU'RE CRAVing for a big, fat, juicy burger but you're too tired to get your car keys and drive to the nearest burger place. What do you do? Why, make your own of course! What could be more relaxing than a thick piece of meat on a bun and your favorite drink while you sit in front of the TV and fall asleep to that DVD that you've been putting off watching?

Here is a quick guide on how to make your own ultimate burger. Of course, there is no limit to what you can add to your meaty masterpiece. Go crazy with the cheese, shower it with pickles, double the patty, go with whatever your taste buds desire!

Ingredients

Burger patties:
1 ½ pounds ground beef
1 egg
3 tablespoons bread Crumbs
2 tablespoons chopped onions
½ tablespoon garlic powder
Burger Buns:
Sautéed mushrooms:
1 regular sized content mushrooms
1/2 cup (more or less) butter
1 tablespoon flour
1 tablespoon minced garlic
Optional:
Lettuce
Tomatoes
Pickles
Cheese (Cheddar/ Mozzarella etc.)
Bacon

1. Combine ground beef, bread crumbs, garlic powder, salt, pepper, chopped onions, and egg into a large bowl. (Shape the meat into large patties and set aside.)

2. Get your grill ready.

3. Grill the meat for about 7 minutes on each side. Cooking time may vary depending on how you want your meat cooked.

4. While your burger is grilling, sauté garlic and onion in butter. Add mushrooms and cook until tender.

5. Fry another pan, and bring your bacon to a crisp.

6. When your patties are ready, place a slice of cheese on top while still on the grill and wait for it to melt. You can also place your buns on the grill and wait until it's toasted.

7. Put your burgers, bacon, and sautéed mushrooms together and add desired condiments and vegetables.

ONCE in a while, skip the hot food and cook your kitchen.

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Amazing movie, though not quite as grand as the first

'Prince Caspian' lacked the novelty of its predecessor

By Mya David
24/7 Contributor

SWORDFIGHTS, CASTLE sieges and arrows flying through the air. Sounds like the stuff you expect when watching a typical epic movie.

But what about dancing trees, talking animals and the sudden treachery of a family member? All that you would expect to see in fantasy novel, and in extravagant movie release.

That is exactly what we get in our in "Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian," the second movie from the C.S. Lewis epic "The Chronicles of Narnia."

Back in 2006, Disney released the first movie to great acclaim. Featuring for the second are the Pevensie kids Peter (William Moseley), Susan (Anna Popplewell), Edmund (Skandar Keynes) and Lucy (Georgie Henley), who are again transported to Narnia.

There they meet Prince Caspian, played by young actor Ben Barnes (he played the younger version of Dawson Theodore in "Southland Tales") in his to the throne of Narnia and Telmarine. It has been 1,300 years in Narnia, but only a year has passed in the Pevensies' world. This time, the Narnians are in hiding and there is a new threat, one that is less magical but still as dangerous.

Striking

The most striking thing about the movie is that the kids have grown up. Little Lucy is now more cute than adorable, Peter is more aggressive and easily takes charge and Edmund is now a very temperamental young man. Will Georgie Henley, though, we can still see the sense of wonder that is very important to her character.

In the movie, she is the first person to believe that Aslan has really come back. While many child actors out there are so annoyed already that whatever wonder they try to project on screen just feels fake, it's not the case with Henley.

Skandar Keys may be a little disappointed that Edmund got less screen time for this movie (mostly to make way for Anna Popplewell), who is finally allowed to join the fight scenes)

TELMARINE soldier

but this only shows how much the character has grown.

Edmund was the one character in the earlier movie who went through the most change in redemption. It does make sense that we see how the effects of the lesson he has learned.

He is more loyal to his family now, and supports his brothers from the sidelines. Anna Popplewell does a pretty good job, too, as Susan. However, this is a much different Susan from that in the books.

Queen Susan is considered very lady-like, and back there is a lady-like reason she didn't join in on the fights. This Susan is very much in the thick of things. She directs the archers during the siege and even rides with Lucy when they go on a dangerous mission together.

Peter and Moseley, however, shows the most change from the previous film. In "The Lion, Witch and the Wardrobe," Moseley played Peter as a boy who realizes he can help this fantastic place but is unsure of the role he has to play.

After his experience as High King, though, Peter puts back in Narnia knowing he should lead the people. He is now more confident, sometimes even cocky. Peter at first does not defer to Caspian; in fact, there is some form of competition between the two boys.

Brilliant

The new additions to the cast were brilliant as well, but none of them stole the show. All the actors were on the same level, and the movie was pretty balanced in terms of acting.

Special props go to Ben Barnes, who had to affect a Spanish accent—which shockingly like a parody. I rarely felt the regality of his, role but there were comic zones where I thought he was purposely kitsch.

As usual, the effects needed for the movie. By now, any movie that involves big armies and dragons will remind people of "Lord of the Rings," but Narnia does it best to differentiate itself from the pack. The effects people made much use of the CGI animal characters in the battle scenes.

In fact the Narnians are so believable, one would think more really know how to fence and Badgers really talked to you about history. And Aslan is the CGI lion's greatest achievement—a much bigger lion with...pointed to necessary closeups.

While this is an amazing movie, "Prince Caspian" just doesn't quite measure up to its predecessor. The novelty that came with finally getting to see Narnia in full scale. Lewis' world in the first movie did not present itself to the second one.

It did not feel grand, and at times the movie did not make you in. But maybe that is the point. The very story the movie is telling is a darker one, all epic-ness gone from it. So, in many scenes, the movie felt flat somehow.

That would be for jaded movie watchers like us. But in the kids cheered the good-vs-bad battle scenes, the movie clearly has done its job for its target audience. In the end, that's all that matters.

BRANDON Parreno expected to win—"But not the grand prize."

SECOND place Aislynn Lim gets a huge check for her fashion creation.

GLAMOROUS gold dress by Lim

The fashionable finale

Nita Mark M. Subito
24/7 Correspondent

AFTER CHOOSING MONTHS of passionate sketching, sewing and adorning, the country's most promising young designers were finally able to show to the public their couture creations via the Animus Fashion Ability grand finale held on April 12 at Rockwell Mall.

After a very successful first run last 2006, the youth-cable-channel's search for the country's next batch of fierce fashion designers returned for another exciting round.

And this year, the inspiration for the contest was the Animax series "Le Chevalier D'Eon," a historical unreal set in 18th century Paris.

The contest attracted close to 400 entries, double the number of last year's 6th Tech entry interrupted to showcase the charm of period Fanser while still being wearable by today's teenager.

During the finals, however, only the Top 20 best designers were able to flaunt their designs on the catwalk.

Juxtaposing the exciting event was a series of musical performances by rock band Imago, hot new R&B artist Xiah Johns together with the All Stars dance group, and crowd favorite Pupil.

The audience was also treated to a very special preview of the summer collection of iconic brand Levi's.

Five celeb judges chose this year's top three winning designers: fashion designer Sibila Tan, fashion photographer David Rebeca, Sky Celebi's Jane Claudino, Bebe Emmanuelle Cristella Ferreros, Philippines' Next Top Model runner-up Jennifer Alvarado and last year's winner Jerome Lantin.

BRANDON Parreno' winning design

THIRD place Ryan Labarro and his modern-day s'kwa

After the fabulous fashion show that featured all 20 designers...from a corset patterned with a lacy bolero to a fun and flirty modern-style French soubrette's party dress—the winners were finally announced.

Third place Ryan Labarro might have had a hard time looking for people to help him especially sew his dress and even had to shell out a large amount of money just to complete his creation, but it was all worth it since he ended up being part of the Top 3, taking home an Animax education prize worth P300.

Second place Aislynn Lim was also very excited about the recognition and her P1,000 that would help her further advance her knowledge in fashion design.

The grand prize winner, Brandon Parreno, a 22-year-old fashion design student at the Cebu Technical-Career Center, wowed the judges and won first place with his charming blue and pink LUTRo-Peep manikin, which had a detachable cape that could be converted into a skirt.

COLORFUL and frilly work by Labarro

Brandy, as Parreno is known to family and friends, nears an education grant worth P1,000.

While all contestants were given sufficient budgets to execute their dresses, Brandy had to spend more for transportation, food and accessories. He also didn't feel much support from those around him, lamenting his friends were too busy to attend the event to show moral support and his family seemed more concerned about the price.

In the end, though, a few of the important people in Brandy's life did show up.

"My mom and sis went even if I told them not to go anymore," he said. "They screamed my winning moment, something I needed on all by myself. I just love making my family proud."

When asked whether he expected to win, Brandy said yes. "But not the grand prize," he quickly added.

"I was merely expecting to get a runner-up slot because there were other powerful, competent and deserving designers apart from mine."

It didn't take long for the wonderful reality to sink in.

"I was shocked, but after a while, I realized that I deserved to win," said Brandy, who thought his dress won because it was a colorful and lively piece that stood out in the crowd.

Animax Fashion-Ability is part of the youth channel's commitment to showcase the diverse interests of young people and create opportunities to engage them.

Visit www.fashionability.asp/fashion-ability.

E-mail the author at nitamarkmsubito@yahoo.com

FINALISTS and winners of this year's Animax Fashion Ability fashion design competition

2b LIFESTYLE

Red Ribbon
Must-try
Ensaimada
The melting texture of soft dough lightly sprinkled with sugar, and lovingly topped with melted butter and grated cheese, delivers warm fulfillment and satisfaction.
You'll definitely love the new improved, softer and more luscious, Ensaimada from Red Ribbon.
It's more beautiful with Red Ribbon

Evaluating energy drinks

If you're looking for that energy boost, look no further than a well-stocked kitchen

Text and photos by Maxi V. Reyes
Zita Correspondent

A TRIP TO THE LOCAL SUPERMARket now will overwhelm you with a mobile array of new energy drinks, with promises of "unrivaled stamina" and "extreme," even boasting ingredients like real jelly and ginseng.

What's in a bottle?

Ingredients that supposedly "enhance performance" include taurine, inositol and sodium citrate.

Taurine is known as a mild sedative, an age-defying anti-oxidant, and has the potential to remedy irregular heartbeats. It regulates brain functions and helps improve memory. It's also isolated from bull bile, although the drinks in the market are synthetically manufactured taurine.

Sodium citrate is used as a preservative in sodas and cleaner agents. It also converts glucose into lactic acid during exercise, and helps replace electrolytes lost when exercising.

But what really gives energy drinks "wings" is one staple ingredient: caffeine.

Caffeine is a stimulant, so it increases concentration and reaction speed, boosts your metabolism and keeps you awake through a full three-hour session with the most boring professor on staff).

An energy drink can contain more than an mg of caffeine a bottle, and, being a distant cousin of cocaine, caffeine can be highly addictive—which explains why some people believe they can't function without their morning coffee.

"The difference between you usual cup of joe and a bottle of Red Bull?

"We actually call energy drinks 'boosters of DOOM,' because they contain added ingredients that provide certain health benefits," Gold's Gym assistant Jeremy Cassil said. "Coffee contains just caffeine and maybe some antioxidants."

Too much of a good thing

Since caffeine increases your heart rate, it can cause palpitations, anxiety attacks and insomnia in some people. But these are the least of an energy drinker's problems.

In 2008, Taiwan banned Red Bull from the market when an 18-year-old Irish basketball player died after ingesting four cans of the stuff. While Red Bull was considered the culprit, doctors cited "Sudden Adult Death Syndrome" as the cause of death.

Certain schools in the United States have prohibited the selling of energy drinks in nearby convenience stores, after students complained of headaches and palpitations because of the drinks.

This is probably what gives energy drinks a bad rap, despite some variants having lower caffeine content than coffee and sodas.

ENGLISH, P2

GOLD'S Gym instructor Joanna Canals believes the balanced vitamin content in energy drinks won't lower one's athletic performance.

Evaluating energy drinks

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"Several coffee cup have more than 100 mg, and soft-drinks like Mountain Dew have more than 30 mg of caffeine," said Jojo Gorosin, brand manager for Rexlone Leo Revalone 100s contains 50 mg of caffeine). "But softdrinks are not marketed by law in more have much caffeine they contain."

He also pointed out that softdrinks (products aren't recommended to children, pregnant women and those with heart ailments. "This is clearly written on our can," he said.

According to Dr. Ramon Orbeta, one of the country's leading dietitians and former chair of the Board of Nutrition, a healthy severe person can stomach up to 300 mg of caffeine a day.

"It also has a psychological effect on people," she said. "Once you're built a tolerance to caffeine, your body thinks it can take in more than the recommended dose."

Some cardiologists are concerned that inducing more than 300 mg of caffeine can cause palpitations.

Caffeine is absorbed by the stomach and small intestine in as fast as 45 minutes, but stays in your system for hours. Caumi and a healthy person who consumes about 200 mg of caffeine can expect it to remain in the system for more than six hours.

Tolerance and lifestyle are big factors in one's reaction to caffeine, but, according to Orbeta, 3-5 mg of caffeine per kilo bad eyesight is a safe amount.

However, cause ingested, an amount of water-changing can mark it from your system.

According to Gaumi, "since caffeine is a diuretic, you lose water. Drinking water just replenishes the water that you've lost. The caffeine, however, still remains in your bloodstream."

Dangerous mix

Now imagine the effects of combining two diuretics.

In 2003, the Swedish National Food Administration looked into the dangers of energy drinks when these people died after drinking energy drink-based cocktails.

So why mix energy drinks with alcohol? Many believe the combination of a "downer" (alcohol) and an "upper" (caffeine) can heighten their senses and give them a feeling of euphoria.

Jose Daniel, a call-center agent, admitted to mixing Extra Joss, a powdered energy-drink variant, with beer the night before her graduation to "keep her going 'til the ceremony."

"I drank so many shots that night, even mixing them," the 21-year-old recalled. "I didn't get a hangover. I felt like I wasn't drunk!"

While adding energy drinks to alcohol is slowly becoming a trend, some energy drink companies don't endorse such practices.

"People prefer to mix Extra Joss in their alcoholic drinks, but we do not encourage this practice unlike some of our competitors," said Bautista sales and marketing manager Dra Leilion.

One of the misconceptions of mixing energy drinks with alcohol is it can lessen one's drunkenness.

In fact, it does the opposite. As an upper, caffeine doesn't reduce the effects of alcohol, but merely makes one more alert, giving the impression that one needs to drink even more alcohol to get drunk. And contrary to what people say, it doesn't prevent hangovers.

"Caffeine dehydrates you. You get hangovers because you're dehydrated. How can taking more caffeine prevent a hangover?" Caumi said.

Reaping the benefits

But what about the added benefits of energy drinks?

One of the oldest ready-to-drink energy drinks launched in the market is Revelon, which happens to high taurine content. While most energy drinks contain 1,000 mg of taurine or less, Revelon contains 2,000 mg.

"Taurine is closely linked with brain development. Aside from enhancing memory it helps keep the mind mentally alert and focused," said Leilion.

"Taurine does not only give that physical boost but, more importantly, provides mental boost. In fact, taurine is also being promoted by various military-style companies in their formula."

While taurine acts as an antioxidant agent in the central nervous system, thus earning its "mental alertness" medal, Caumi said ingredients like taurine and ginseng are "unrecognized chemicals" since our bodies manufacture them for us.

"Taurine may be a good supplement for infants, who can't produce enough themselves, but for adults, it's not that necessary."

And since taurine can be derived from animal products, chances are, if you're a carnivore, you're already getting your daily fill.

"You get a sufficient amount of taurine from the meat you eat and from dairy products," Orbeta said.

As far as how much taurine you need, Orbeta pointed out that food and Nutrition researchers mostly focus on recommended doses of macronutrients like calcium, magnesium and potassium.

And while the wonder drug Inositol's antidepressant properties can be found in some energy drinks, the dosages isn't enough to make much of an effect.

According to Wired magazine, you'd need to take about 200 cans of Red Bull a day to reap its benefits. Again, Orbeta said that inositol can be found in foods like peanuts, oranges, and cantaloupe.

Aside from the high taurine content, Leilion said that Revalone is the only drink that contains Korean ginseng, which is supposed to be the most expensive ginseng in the world.

Between 1-On, on the other hand, includes ginseng, royal jelly, inositol and B-vitamins. All its benefits, Orbeta said, can be found in the food we eat everyday.

Despite the supposed health benefits and performance-enhancing effects of these drinks, Caumi said he doesn't recommend them to her clients.

"I don't make my clients drink caffeine at least two hours before a game, because it can cause anxiety."

While studies showed ginseng reduced muscle fatigue in rats, the herb isn't a necessary ingredient. "A good alternative is glucose. Glucose gives you energy and you just remember the energy that glucose gives you."

So for the sedans in energy drinks? They help replenish electrolytes lost through perspiration. However, too much can be toxic.

"It's not recommended for those who aren't physically active," Caumi said. "It can do great damage to your kidneys, and cause lots of problems, such as acute acid crystal formation."

All of these extra added ingredients in energy drinks, said Orbeta, may explain one ingredient in what makes their product better isn't right," said Orbeta. "It's also not a good idea to just pop in as one mentions, because you really need a balanced diet to function well."

The best energy boost

Energy boosters are surging into different markets as well. ION Marketing, manufacturer of Red Bull, has launched "Barako Energy Coffee Mix," a powdered energy drink that has the full-flavor of coffee, but includes taurine, inositol, ginseng, royal jelly, vitamin B complex.

For Orbeta, though, if you're looking for that energy boost, you should look no further than a well-stocked kitchen.

"Energy comes from the correct amounts of protein, fat and carbohydrates, not from energy drinks," he said.

"These energy drink manufacturers are numbering gimmicks. They make you think you need their product to perform well. But really, nothing can replace a good breakfast. You get your en-

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INSTANT pick-me-uppers

NUTRITIONIST Dr. Ramon Orbeta believes in "food first, food second and supplements third."

Which one gives the best energy boost?

Text and photos by Maud V. Reyes
The Correspondent

WE GOT SOME WILLING GUINEA pigs, gave them each an energy drink in the morning and recorded up their feedback.

Extra Joss

Caffeine, 50 mg; Taurine, 1,000 mg; Inositol, 50 mg; Ginseng, 20 mg

Taste: "Like bland Mountain Dew (3.5 stars (out of 5)."

Energy: "It gave me a little boost, but it was short-remembered."

Would you take it again?: "No."

—Bobbie Reyes, mixed-martial artist, 28

Extra Energy Lipovitan

Caffeine, 30 mg

Taste: "I use it tastes like cough medicine!"

Energy: "It picked me up, but now I have a headache."

Would you take it again?: "No, but only if really necessary."

—James Bernardo, advertising executive director

Revicon I-On

Caffeine, 50 mg; Taurine, 1,000 mg; Inositol, 50 mg; Royal Jelly, 300 mg; Ginseng, 25 mg

Taste: "Had a sweet citrus flavor to it. Nothing too heavily syrupy with enough syrup content like Red Bull or Lipovitan. I liked the fact that it had a bit of carbonation to it."

Energy: "Not noticeably. I feel the caffeine content of this drink is a bit more toned down than the ones I usually take."

Would you take it again?: "Maybe, if I need a quick pick-me-up after 3 p.m. But it won't keep me up the whole day."

—Mark Uy, photographer, 23

Red Bull

Caffeine, 80 mg; Taurine, 1,000 mg; Inositol, 20 mg

Taste: "Very sweet! 5 stars!"

Energy: "The energy kicks in after a couple of minutes."

Would you take it again?: "Yes, and I always will!"

—Anna Benaventi, media relations clerk, 23

Lipovitan Ira Lite

Taste: "Orange-ripple. A bit like mandarine, but I guess it's because it's a lighter version. 3 stars."

Energy: "Not so much. I can't tell how much caffeine is in it, since it's not listed on the bottle."

Would you take it again?: "Maybe, if I need a quick pick-me-up after 3 p.m. But it won't keep me up the whole day."

—Mark Uy, photographer, 23

Bacchus

Caffeine: 68, mg; Taurine, 1,000 mg

Taste: "Citrusy and more palatable as a typical beverage drinker. I think Red Bull tastes better, though. I give it a 3.5."

Energy: "Not noticeably. I feel the caffeine content of this drink is a bit more toned down than the ones I usually take."

Would you take it again?: "Yeah, if I need a quick pick-me-up before Red Bull at 7-11. I'll still pick Red Bull."

—Eric Gumboman, subscribing accounts manager, 35

Sting

Taste: "Like strawberry soda with a slight medicinal after-taste. 0.0 give it 4 stars."

Energy: "Average. I'm not jumping up off the walls just yet."

Would you take it again?: "Not really... If I wanted something carbon drink, I'd reach for a Coke."

—Dolores, nurse, 24

Playing father to Katsuhiro

By Nitz Mark N. Sablan
24/7 Correspondent

I WAS ALREADY 14 MINUTES late for Hiromi Hosokawa's 10th birthday party that Sunday afternoon, so I quickened my steps to Greenhills, the mall's middle amusement center where she was celebrating her pink princess-themed party.

I had to make it fast because Hiromi, her younger brothers Katsuhiro and Matsunori and their mother Masahiro were staying in the Philippines for just a week.

After four long years, I was to see my godson Katsuhiro again. I was elated, but was also a bit nervous and afraid. What if he wasn't as adorable and lovable as I once knew him to be? Worse, what if he didn't feel the same way about me anymore?

But Katsuhiro's my life when I was just a sometime college student. One sweaty afternoon at a friend's house, the front door opened with a loud bang and in rushed a quiet if hare-raised baby, wearing nothing but a diaper, crying like wind-up chimp.

Before long, an apologetic looking mother entered the house, explaining that Katsuhiro and Matsumi had a knack for gatecrashing. Before it was time to go, however, Katsuhiro and I were all over each other. After a time, he finally loosened his grip and bade goodbye.

I met Hiromi that Katsuhiro and her twin Matsumori were born in the time of celebrities since their mother and older sister were living in Japan.

The mother was in the process of ending her relationship with the father of her children, and needed at least one of her kids with her as she tried to lonely chicks.

I regularly dropped by their house to play with Katsuhiro for a while, immediately of all the hours that ordained by I carried him around and played scenery Square with him and showered him with kisses every time.

Whenever I needed to go home, he exploded in tears, begging me to tightly that his relatives needed to pool him away because.

It broke my heart every time I had to leave him, but deep inside there was also little feeling of being wanted and loved by this boy that made me smile sweetly.

I became a fixture in Katsuhiro's life—as a playmate, a best friend, an older brother and a "manong"—that I was offered to be his godfather. I felt so privileged by the title that I wanted to be not just his godfather, but also his stepfather, given that his real father turned second.

Movie-watching

When Katsuhiro was a bit older, I tagged him along to the mall and fed him McDonald's fried chicken while he anxiously the horrid visits his own Happy Meal toy.

I brought him to a dinosaur museum and witnessed how his jaw dropped from all the moving mechanical dinosaurs he had seen only in pictures books up until then.

I introduced him to his first movie experience when we watched "Brother Bear." It was pitch-dark inside the cinemas, but I saw his Japanese eyes on wide open in wonder.

We bonded not one month together, save in the park to enjoy the swings and the slides, and not in a more convenient where we weren't inquired about the food that they thought my "son" wasn't fed for the day.

Katsuhiro had some sort of speech defect. He was already 4 years old, but he still had a difficult time enunciating. No matter how much he tried, he always ended up producing an unrecognizable babble.

His relatives, his twin brother Arthur spoke clearly and was even in a class above, and I assumed always had a hard time understanding what he was trying to say, so he usually had to partner his words with gestures.

He knew how to say one word perfectly though—"Papa," the term he used in call me. It was music to my ears. Sometimes I pretended not to hear him, just so he could call me "papa" again and again.

One day Joel never arrived. The extra went finally going to Japan to be with their mother, their sister and a new stepdad. I thought that anything about it, or I just made the most joy of the little time that Katsuhiro and I had had together.

When Katsuhiro flew to Japan, I was crushed. I missed him every single day, until I graduated and got preoccupied with work.

The years passed by and the next thing I knew, Katsuhiro and the rest of the family were visiting the Philippines to celebrate Hiromi's birthday.

Slow motion

In those I was, 10 minutes late and wanting to kick myself in the head. I didn't have forever to spend with probably the most important person to my life...someone I hadn't seen for the last 4 years, and I was running late.

The whole world went slow-motion when I finally laid my eyes on Katsuhiro once again. He looked a little different—a couple of inches taller, bare longer, his features a bit more defined. But it was still the same Katsuhiro I had always loved.

THE AUTHOR and his godson Katsuhiro

We ran beside each other as I waved at him, mesmerized by his presence. He was busy playing with a huge pillow when Hiromi called me over to say hello. I could tell he didn't instantly recognize me. His unknown glances, questions and long moments of silence revealed that.

So, hours now to time, I whipped out my mobile phone and showed him old pictures of him and of us together, describing each moment so vividly as I could, even if I knew he didn't understand me.

I asked him if he remembered our trip to the disco museum or the "Brother Bear" movie we

PLEASE TURN

30 minutes of nonstop laughter

DOUBLE laughs with Jeanine Chanco and Eric McKenzie

By Mael P. Reyes
PEP Correspondent

IF YOU'RE HOOKED UP TO the internet and regularly download surveys, it would be really sad if you're not familiar with Jeanine Chanco and Eric McKenzie, who make up Flight of the Conchords, also known as "New Zealand's Fourth Most Popular Folk-Parody Duo."

Now they've paired up with HBO and created their own series, titled, oh, "Flight of the Conchords".

"Fictitiously" playing themselves, the series revolves around Jeanine and Eric, who move to New York in the hopes of making it big in the music scene. But with a manager like Murray (played by Rhys Darby), a Deputy Colonel Rachel at the New Zealand consulate—who looks the band as places like the city aquarium—it might take longer than they expect.

Fortunately, their New York circle is filled with a lovable cast of characters that make breaking into the so-called "music industry" worth it.

There's pawnshop owner Irene (played by Arj Barker), who gives them advice on American culture and women ("Can you stop away from me? I'm trying to look lonely. Chicks are attracted to lonely guys, it's a psychological ploy"); their con-and-only fan, a married neighbor named Mel (Rita Wilson); and their landlord, played by comedian Eugene Mirman.

What makes Flight of the Conchords worth watching are the duo's witty repartees and their songs. Throughout each episode, the two break into a song to express their feelings about situations.

Some gems are "Mutt the Rasta Bingpot" ("I'm racist, get your hand off my tail, you'll make it dirty"), "The Most Beautiful Girl in the Room" ("You're so beautiful, you could be a part-time model, but you'd probably still have to keep your normal job"), and the knee-chapping "Business Time" ("Making love for two…for one minute").

There digi-folk sounds and [illegible] are definitely still have you downloading clips on YouTube to relive each moment. Think Weird Al, but if crossed with Dennett Harris, and you've got a deeper psychiatric bit.

Throw in a slew of cameos (former Chalice star Rachel Blanchard, HBO's Will Forte, and the awesomely funny Jermett Blanton), and you've got 30-minutes of laugh-out-loud comedy. Trust us—there's a reason why this duo won a Grammy for Best Comedy Album this year.

Catch the first season of Flight of the Conchords on HBO Signature starting Monday, June 9, at 10 p.m.

Here comes 'New Zealand's Fourth Most Popular Folk-Parody Duo!'

Talented kids on YouTube

By Miss Mark M. Sabian
PEP Correspondent

WHILE SOME KIDS WATCH SPONGEbob Squarepants or play PSP, others would rather sing and dance.

The following YouTube videos showcase the singing, dancing, even the lip-syncing skills of some very young talents. They don't even have to grow up and be famous. YouTube has already made them cyber-stars, based on the number of clicks their videos have received. Enjoy!

Miss Facial Expression

http://youtube.com/watch?v=8w1Hsbz8Zlg
Search: Cute kid singing

If you're not Malaysian, you won't understand what this little girl is singing about. But it doesn't really matter, because the girl's fidgeting eyes, gestures and cute facial expressions are more than enough to make you want to watch this home video again and again and again.

Miss Sassypants Supreme

http://youtube.com/watch?v=L2Dpy9OMeUk
Search: The Original Copycatter Video

Cuteness perfectly describes this video, the singers (then 2-year-old Amy Gee, 5½ and the song "Where'd My Honeybunch" or "The Copycatter Song"). With a melody as simple yet catchy and a message both personal and universal, this song has become so famous that it's been covered by so many fans from all over the world. If you enjoyed the adorable duo here, you'll adore her even more in the Copycatter Bloopers and Outtakes video, where she forgets her lines and horses around with her parents.

The one who watched too many Beyoncé vids

http://youtube.com/watch?v=iQLwRje_MCU&feature
Search: Dru Hastings To Beyoncé

Call him hyperactive, but there is no denying how flexible, groovy and talented this little boy is. Just watch his dance number to the tune of Beyoncé's "Irreplaceable." Every kick, drop, spin, scrunny walk, gyration and crawl he does is amazing. Most watch parts are when he kicks the chair and when he does the dance thing with the mall.

The Lip Sync-er

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pmMMDhpRQM&NR=1
Search: Star King #44 - Boy dancing To(Me, Girls Generation (ver.)

"Star King"—the Korean talent show where one boy sees Channel 9 merging to the opposite—overflows with talented individuals, including those who can't really sing and but just lip-sync. Six-year-old Jae Doo, for instance—a Korean boy who has a thing for famous girl group songs. Watch him lip-sync his way to the hearts of the audience, complete with appropriate dance moves, appropriate facial expressions and more. Check out this charmer's other performances by searching for "Star King #44—Tearful Police & Cute Boy Tell Me Dance (ver.)." Don't you just want to have a son like Jae Doo?

What entertaining, hilarious or creepy YouTube videos do you want to share with PEP readers? E-mail the author at emarkmarksabian@yahoo.com

She doesn't like me because I'm in a band

Will you be able to stand up to your personal slogan, "the most wonderful boyfriend ever"?

DEAR JEWEL,

I play guitar in a band (that's presidentiable, and I guess it's true—when you're a presidentiable you get the girls. Well, almost. I've been there and done all that. The problem is, I like this girl very much, but she doesn't want to have anything to do with me because I'm in a band. How can I convince her that I can be the most wonderful boyfriend ever, if she'll just let me?

GUITAR HERO

Dear Hero,

It all really depends on how much you want this thing to happen, you know. Convincing her to give you a chance is only the tip of the iceberg. The most important thing is what happens after she says yes.

Will you be able to stand up to your personal slogan, "the most wonderful boyfriend ever"? Make sure you can before you make all the effort, otherwise you'll just be wasting her time, and yours, too.

Be her friend first, and don't annoy her by constantly reminding her of your agenda. In fact, forget about it for the moment. Think about it...if you're being chased, the tendency is to run. Sincerely, be there for her without expecting anything in return. In time, she will realize that you're boyfriend material, after all.

Oh course, if she still says no, it means no. Respect her decision and move on.

Rock on,
Jewel

Dear Jewel,

I am the youngest in a brood of four, and the only girl. Needless to say, my parents are very protective of me. What they don't know is that I already have a boyfriend, and he's much, much older than me. I know my father will have a heart attack if he learns about it, and my mother would probably just tip over and die. I know it's not the most ideal of relationships, but my parents are almost never home anyway and my older siblings ignore me, so it's just me boyfriend I can talk to. What should I do?

DADDY'S GIRL

Dear 'Boo,

Much as I would like to send you in your room without dinner, you're not a little girl anymore. You're mature enough to realize that what you're doing is hazardous to your parents' health. If you feel your family is ignoring you, make the effort to be with them. They might just be busy with their own lives, so don't wait for them to come to you.

Oh yeah, before I forget, do you love this much older boyfriend? Or do you love him because he has time to talk to you? I'm afraid a very large percentage of what you feel for him might not be love. Using rationalization as a substitute for the attention you're not getting from your family is not fair. Though I admit that unconditional love in relationship in your family will definitely get you noticed, but not in the way you want.

Go play outside,
Jewel

Dear Jewel,

I was in a long-distance relationship for more than three years. We haven't seen each other yet, but we communicated through calls and e-mails. I got tired of waiting, so I broke up with him. It was a friendly breaking, but when I wanted to get my stuff back he was still there in his e-mails. He rejects my call and doesn't reply to my e-mails. How do I get my things back?

PENELOPE

Dear Penelope,

I'm confused. It's a long-distance relationship and you haven't met him, yet you have stuff with him? Unless you sent him your heirloom jewelry or stock certificates or valuable lotto tickets, let it go.

If I may point him, (please don't have a relationship with someone you haven't met. Time, they can be witty and interesting in the chatroom or in their e-mails. But those things don't have the value of the face-to-face conversation. Before writing, we usually think first about what we're going to write, then it's already edited.

When talking with someone in person, we take everything in—facial expressions, hand gestures, eye contact. It's all part of communicating, not just what is spoken aloud.

Get off the Internet,
Jewel

E-mail the author at jewel-lifestyle@yahoo.com.ph

Evaluating...

From page D1

egg from a good breakfast and a well-balanced meal. The problem with kids today, especially those in call centers, is that they don't have the time to have a proper meal because they're always rushing. So instead, they take caffeine to stay awake."

Having invited many of the country's athletes, Orfanel said he explained the food pyramid for a healthy balanced diet. "I tell the PBA players to bring oranges and pasta to practice—good food to give them the energy they need."

And for that extra energy boost? The most simple and affordable energy drink possible, a teaspoon of brown sugar in a glass of water with a dash of pandan or calamansi. "They get the necessary fiber they need for energy. It's as simple as that," she said.

However, she said if you can tolerate drinks like Red Bull, then go right ahead with the chugging—in moderation.

"When it comes to anything with caffeine, take it in moderation. And make sure your drink has real sugar. Women should take nine glasses, and men 12 glasses."

"If you don't have sufficient knowledge about the product, don't take it," she cautioned. "I see people who throw up after drinking an energy drink, and they claim they took it because their friends said it gives them energy. What is good for one person might not be good for you."

Orfanel put it another way. "There is nothing inherently wrong nor unhealthy with energy drinks. The ingredients are common to pharmaceuticals and health products. The problems only arise when the product usage is abused, and when people are misinformed."

Playing father...

From page D1

watched. Every time, I was not watch shoots.

During his sister's party, Earnshire was online[illegible] message to greet the celebrant. He pulled out a sheet of paper and confidently read his greeting in Japanese. Knowing how he used to struggle for words not too long ago, I felt like a beaming dad who was supervised of his son.

Later on, after the party, Earnshire and I had fun with the amusement center rides such as the merry-go-round, the lobbing lava and the chair chico rides. Even if I knew he didn't understand a single word I said, I kept talking to him in English. He, on the other hand, wouldn't reply to me, even in Japanese.

He just nodded or shook his head, and grabbed me by the hand when he wanted me to ride, say the rollercoaster, which I couldn't bring myself to do.

While waiting for our turn in the bump cars line, Earnshire, out of nowhere gave me a long look, took my hands and snuggled himself in my arms.

That single action confirmed to many things that he recognized me, that he still cared about me and that he still somehow considered me his papa, even if he couldn't say the same anymore.

E-mail the author at misconceptions@yahoo.com

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Bernie G. Velarde

www.facebook.com/inquirer.entertainment Website: www.inquirer.net/entertainment

Tayo na! Eto na! Pangatlo na!
The FIRST. The ORIGINAL. ...WATCH OUT TOMORROW!!!
makro EXTRAVAGANZA 2008
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CANITA • DAVAO • LAS PIÑAS • NORTH HARBOUR
Watch out for more surprises!

As thousands mourn Daboy loss

By Maricris R. Cruz
Photos by Nikko Jesse Ortuoste

JUST AS HE HAD vetoed, thousands of fans showed up on Saturday night to pay their last respects to actor Rudy "Daboy" Fernandez, who died of perianpullary cancer at 6:45 that morning.

According to Rudy's wife, Lorna Tolentino, it was the actor's desire that his wake be open to the public. "He had said he would be really happy if a lot of people would come to see him," said Lorna. She added that Rudy had personally chosen The Heritage Memorial Park and Crematorium in Taguig City as the venue.

A long line of mourners had formed to see Rudy's remains at Chapel 7 of the Heritage Park when heavy entertainment paid a visit at 9 p.m. on Saturday. Without any public announcement available to the area, many came on foot just to get there.

Security was beefed up to avoid jostling of the huge crowd.

Rudy's interment is scheduled tomorrow after the necrological Mass at 1 p.m.

Lorna appeared calm and composed when she faced the entertainment press for the first time since Rudy's death. "Thank you to all the friends and fans who journeyed with us for two years," she said. "Rudy's was a life well lived and a life well-ended."

AS THOUSANDS, E2

There's life after 'Wowowee'

DOLLY WOOD
Dolly Anne Carvajal

FOR PRECIOUS LARA QUIGAMAN, there's life after "Wowowee." She's all ogng preparing for a segment that will introduce her to the industry.

"The controversy has made me learn how to speak up for what's right even if I'm up against influential people," she says.

How has it affected her if she's pinpointed as one of the reasons why she was axed from the show? "He was quite mad and felt guilty after being blamed for disturbing me in our US show. As much as he wanted to confront the person who caused me badly, he's being a gentleman about it."

Is she still willing to go back to the show? "I cannot work in a show where I'm not welcome and sometimes rules are misinterpreted," she laments.

As far as Lara knows, she broke no rule and yet a pair of her boats got broken.

La Vida Luna

Paulene Luna is not getting impatient waiting for her big break. "I'm not starving. If it comes, it comes," she says. "Besides I'm too happy with my love life and my career."

She's busy as the endorser of Ilocos Pinoy herbal beauty products. What's her opinion about the trouble between the owners of the product and its former image model Melanie Marquez? "I'm not involved so I'd rather not comment," she says.

With her Princess glow, Paulene is ripe to pose for FHM but she's still hesitant. "The time will come for that."

She's in no rush to get ahead because she's enjoying where she is right now.

Back in town

Dingdong Avanzado and Anne Zarragosa are back in town. But not to get back at Bella Mae Quidato for her allegations that Jesse snatched Dingdong away from her, many heartaches ago.

"What she said was totally unfair and inaccurate," says Dingdong, who would rather focus on the celebrity golf tournament his company (Marcus Apparel) is executing in Ilocos and their US concert tour after he celebrates his birthday here next month.

Will they entertain throughout counting peaks with Bella Mae anytime soon?

THERE'S, E2

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METRO MANILA

IMAX

Admission Price: P300

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 KUNG FU PANDA
3 KUNG FU PANDA
4 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
5 NARNIA
INDIANA JONES
SEX & THE CITY
RESERVED

Admission Price: P300

PODIUM

NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN

KUNG FU PANDA

EXTENDED OPENING HOURS

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 INDIANA JONES
3 KUNG FU PANDA
4 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
5 KUNG FU PANDA
6 THE HAPPENING
7 WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS
8 IRON MAN
9 SEX & THE CITY
SHOWCASES
UNSCREWED
111

NARNIA

CINEMA 1
Admission Price: P160

1 KUNG FU PANDA
2 CAREGIVER
3 THE HAPPENING

1 SEX & THE CITY
2 IRON MAN
3 INDIANA JONES
4 KUNG FU PANDA
5 THE HAPPENING
6 CAREGIVER
7 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
8 RESERVED
9 21

1 KUNG FU PANDA
2 INDIANA JONES
3 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
4 CAREGIVER
5 SEX & THE CITY
6 IRON MAN
7 FORBIDDEN KINGDOM

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 THE HAPPENING
3 CAREGIVER
4 KUNG FU PANDA

1 THE HAPPENING
2 CAREGIVER
3 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
4 KUNG FU PANDA

1 KUNG FU PANDA
2 THE HAPPENING
3 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
4 INDIANA JONES
5 CAREGIVER
6 21
7 IRON MAN
8 SEX & THE CITY
9 FORBIDDEN KINGDOM

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 THE HAPPENING
3 CAREGIVER
4 KUNG FU PANDA

1 THE HAPPENING
2 CAREGIVER
3 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
4 KUNG FU PANDA

SOON TO OPEN

LUZON

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 KUNG FU PANDA
3 KUNG FU PANDA
4 THE HAPPENING
5 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
6 CAREGIVER
7 INDIANA JONES
8 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN

1 INDIANA JONES
2 CAREGIVER
3 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
4 KUNG FU PANDA

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 KUNG FU PANDA
3 INDIANA JONES
4 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN

1 INDIANA JONES
2 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
3 KUNG FU PANDA
4 THE HAPPENING

1 THE HAPPENING
2 KUNG FU PANDA
3 CAREGIVER
4 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN

1 CAREGIVER
2 KUNG FU PANDA
3 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN

1 INDIANA JONES
2 CAREGIVER
3 KUNG FU PANDA
4 INDIANA JONES
5 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN

1 INDIANA JONES
2 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
3 CAREGIVER
4 KUNG FU PANDA

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 KUNG FU PANDA
3 CAREGIVER
4 INDIANA JONES
5 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN

1 CAREGIVER
2 KUNG FU PANDA
3 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN

SOON TO OPEN

VISAYAS • MINDANAO

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 NEVER BACK DOWN
3 CAREGIVER
4 KUNG FU PANDA
5 INDIANA JONES
6 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN

1 CAREGIVER
2 SECRETARY
3 KUNG FU PANDA
4 PERFECT CREATURE
5 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
6 INDIANA JONES
7 RESERVED
8 THE HAPPENING

1 THE HAPPENING
2 KUNG FU PANDA
3 RESERVED
4 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
5 CAREGIVER

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 NEVER BACK DOWN
3 CAREGIVER
4 KUNG FU PANDA

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
3 CAREGIVER
4 KUNG FU PANDA

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
3 KUNG FU PANDA
4 CAREGIVER

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
3 KUNG FU PANDA
4 CAREGIVER

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CINEMA ACCESS: 635-5555

MOVIEWORLD

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GALLERIA

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 KUNG FU PANDA
3 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
4 KUNG FU PANDA
5 INDIANA JONES

6 CARE GIVER
7 21
8 IndieSine: KATORSE SHORTS
8 SEX AND THE CITY
10 KUNG FU PANDA

ERMITA

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 KUNG FU PANDA
3 INDIANA JONES
4 INDIANA JONES
5 SEX AND THE CITY

6 KUNG FU PANDA
7 21
8 CARE GIVER
9 KUNG FU PANDA

METRO EAST

1 KUNG FU PANDA
2 KUNG FU PANDA
3 SEX AND THE CITY
4 21

6 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
6 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
7 INDIANA JONES
8 CARE GIVER

NOVALICHES

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 KUNG FU PANDA

3 CARE GIVER
4 INDIANA JONES

PIONEER

1 KUNG FU PANDA
2 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN

3 INDIANA JONES
4 CARE GIVER

STA. ROSA

1 KUNG FU PANDA
2 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
3 CARE GIVER
4 MEGA SNAKE

LIPA

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 KUNG FU PANDA
3 CARE GIVER
4 THE POSSESSED

DASMARINAS

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 KUNG FU PANDA
3 MEGASNAKE
4 CARE GIVER

IMUS

1 KUNG FU PANDA
2 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
3 INDIANA JONES
4 CARE GIVER

ANGELES

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 KUNG FU PANDA

3 CARE GIVER
4 PERFECT CREATURE

STARMILLS

1 21
2 PERFECT CREATURE
3 INDIANA JONES

4 CARE GIVER
5 KUNG FU PANDA
6 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN

BACOLOD

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 KUNG FU PANDA
3 CARE GIVER
4 INDIANA JONES
5 MEGA SNAKE
6 NEVER BACK DOWN

ILOILO

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 KUNG FU PANDA
3 CARE GIVER
4 INDIANA JONES
5 THE SAVAGES
6 PERFECT CREATURE | MEGA SNAKE

Opening This Week

Katorse Shorts

Stars: Alex Paulo, Mon Donologo, Sid Lucero, Jaycee Jimagiban, Joey Sandico

Directed by: Gigi Seguerra, Richard Legaspi, John Pimpi, Rina Lubelle Mabelina, Grace Orbon, Jeyaseon Barron Sanchez

The Reverse Writers' Group (members of Ricky Lee's 'Ah-Eh Scriptwriting Workshop) has come up with seven short films "ranging from the romantic to the tragic and the absurd." Among the featured shorts are Seguerra's "Ang Kapatiran ni Virgin Blanco," Legaspi's "Amina, Inocin." Mong's "Wanpina."

Directed by: Mark Meily, Zoren Legaspi, Dondon Santos, Jerrold Tarog, Dado Lumibao, Jeffrey Jeturian, Joel Lamangan, Carlitos Siguion-Reyna

Screenplay by: Ricky Lee, Jerrold Tarog, Jerry Gracio, Jeffrey Jeturian, Joel Lamangan, Carlitos Siguion-Reyna

Running time: 2 hours 30 minutes

Rating: R-13

Synopsis: 'The Body' satisfies any fetish," Allison Hope of The New York Times points out. "It is a return to the kind of sexy movie hated but made [Mesmedan] famous." Joshua Tyler of CinemaBlend.com asserts: "Shyamalan needs this film to be a hit ... This is a different ... sadder M. Night."

Marcelino's "Pwersang" and "Walang Lingga," Olbos's "Dead Lover" and Sarabia's "Labaho." Exclusively at Indefilms Robinsons Galleria.

The Happening

Stars: Mark Wahlberg, Zooey Deschanel, John Leguizamo, Spencer Breslin, Betty Buckley

Directed by: M. Night Shyamalan

As a seven-under leads to mass suicides, a couple flees the city and tries to figure out the cause of the deadly outbreak. An early review on www.collider.com is harsh: "A huge mess ...

The Incredible Hulk

Stars: Edward Norton, Liv Tyler, Tim Roth, William Hurt, Lou Ferrigno

Directed by: Louis Leterrier

Riding in Brazil, Bruce Banner (Norton) must return to the US and battle a new mutant enemy, the Abomination (Roth). Aaron (Friday of Jeff) Howie Dupe thinks "it doesn't wears a single frame or dull talky exposition. It's all plot-driven and action-filled." Jordan Hulley of Pop Syndicate agrees: "Everything literally flies by at such a breakneck pace that you really don't have time to notice the digital flaws." Gregory Kirschling of Entertainment Weekly says: "Marvel's decision to cast Norton was a gutsy choice."

As thousands . . .

Front page E1

She said her husband had prepared his family for his death. "He spoke each all of his children, with me, with his siblings. If there's one good thing about his illness, it was that he had time to say goodbye to all of us."

"I know you," was Andy's last words to her. "I think that says it all," she said.

Andy, son of respected director Gregorio Fernandez, had wanted to make a movie about a dying man and requested filmmaker Joel Javier Reyes to write and direct it. "I never got around to working that story line because I just couldn't do it," Reyes told Inquirer Entertainment in this author's wake.

Reyes said Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, one of Andy's bosom buddies, recently asked him to do a film about male friendship. "I can do that," he said. "I've seen how close Andy and Jinggoy were. Andy was there when Jinggoy won his Best Actor award [for "Batas ng Sandata]. They had an extraordinary friendship."

Among those now attending the Mass on Saturday night were actors Tirso Cruz III, Lee Martinez, Christopher de Leon, Bembol Roco, Gina Alajar and Boy Cortez, and directors Joel Lamangan and Carlitos Siguion-Reyna.

E-mail: mcruz@inquirer.com.ph

BOYET de Leon

LOUT Soto

OPENS JUNE 19

MMTA MOVIE GUIDE

There's life...

From page E1

More roses

Lani Mercado would rather ignore talk that Lani Peña's mom doesn't approve of **John Revilla** for his daughter. She also refuses to comment about the rumored gap between the Revillas and her daughter Isabel's in-laws. "Isa's lives present enough to all," Nene Chan's cousin Mona.

'Pushlosang'

Pokwang cried while watching the movie "You and the City." "Super[s] also cute. Super[s] also funny, especially[sic]," she says. Such is her sense of humor. The comedienne was laughed-off herself when she briefly Coach her with **Dyan** to keep Lloyd's "Pushlosang," Friday, and Jennydays of June, 8 p.m. at the Music Museum. Let the laughter begin! Laugh to let.

Gabby's case

I heard Gabby Concepcion's lawyer is "baked" saying that Gabi's marriage was brief. In **Sharon Cuneta** was unfolded, making their union null and void from the start. So gone his defense in Gabby's bigamy case. That was also the case in my mid-marriage. But I still had to file for annulment. The unfolded document didn't help much. Maybe Gabby should ask his Dear Heart what to do now.

E-mail reacts@philstar.com or tanyadavao@yahoo.com

Tribute to oppressed OFWs

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

CURTIS WONG'S "CARGIVER" (script by Gloria Martinez) is a movingly realistic tribute to Filipino OFWs who put up with all sorts of hardships and indignities to make money for the loved ones they've left in the Philippines. There have been other such movies in the past, but Curtis film is better than most, because of its commitment to unsentimentality.

The film follows the story of Sandy (**Shaina Cineros**), a student who leaves her son behind in the care (pay her husband Teddy (**John Estrada**), who's working as a waiter in London. Shortchanged by a employer who includes her husband given no enough income to cover the "three months" needed to eventually bring their son over, so they can become a real family again.

Also, her dream of family unity is shattered when she's quickly traumatized by her ruddy duties as a caregiver, which include having to deal with the smelly mess that her incontinent senile 81-year-old folks' home constantly create. She's also turned off by her husband's spendthrift ways and generally povish attitude, which eventually prompt her to make a big decision at their end.

Along the way, she gets to interact with a number of Filipinos living and working in London, as well as some generally catty and inappreciative English patients.

Knightful contrast

However, my appreciation for knightful existed the movie makes between disparity circumstances in England and the Philippines, with Sandy's old friends reaping all the success for it that is what childhood's existence lack of money would buy.

The instructive contrast is a reminder to hard-to-see that, while we must never be wrong things, a caring and supportive hands life is generally not one of them.

The restrained performances in the film are owed by Shaina as subtly full portrayal of the role and mother who has to make her own make and sacrifices. As one of her family's material-selfless—only to come to a liberating realization in the end. This defining moment is too hastily staged, but its point is clear.

Others standouts include **Benny Bonifacio** as a doctor who "dumbs" himself down to the level of a nurse so he can find work abroad, and the British actor who plays Sandy's most put-upon lovely-haired ward, Ida Morgan.

Hilario's performance is particularly moving because his doctor turned nurse is character to put in a situation where he loses a woman's life by contradicting his "elder" dialogue to intone. **Monique Wilson**'s caregiver character isn't given enough screen time to play a significant role in the story. Sarah and Sadie's fight scene aren't staged creatively enough and tend up feeling repetitive.

SHARONI Cuneta and John Estrada

Yet these intervallation make the movie a more textured and insightful viewing experience, but they also weaken "Caregiver" being evoking, which in turn makes it difficult for the production to build up and push to evoke it should have.

Other weak points were pivotal characters. The troubled boy played by **Mickey Sheridan** is given inappropriate

AT THE CINEMAS

GLORIETTA 1	1 KUNG FU PANDA	2 THE HAPPENING	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN	4 CARGIVER
GLORIETTA 4	1 KUNG FU PANDA	2 SEX & THE CITY	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN	
	4 SPEED RACER	5 KUNG FU PANDA	6 THE HAPPENING	7 KUNG FU PANDA
GREENBELT 1	1 KUNG FU PANDA	2 THE HAPPENING		
GREENBELT 2	1 KUNG FU PANDA	2 THE HAPPENING		
	3 KUNG FU PANDA	4 SPEED RACER	5 SEX & THE CITY	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THE HAPPENING	2 KUNG FU PANDA		
	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN	4 KUNG FU PANDA	5 SEX & THE CITY	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE HAPPENING	2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN	3 KUNG FU PANDA	4 SEX & THE CITY
MARKET! MARKET!	1 THE HAPPENING	2 KUNG FU PANDA		
	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN	4 CARGIVER	5 KUNG FU PANDA	
TRINOMA	1 CARGIVER	2 SEX & THE CITY	3 KUNG FU PANDA	4 INDIANA JONES
	5 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN	6 KUNG FU PANDA	7 THE HAPPENING	

For reservations and more information, please call 729-7777

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

Glorietta — HUGGIES EVENT, June 14-15, Glorietta Activity Center

Greenbelt — PLEASURES AT GREENBELT ON FATHER'S DAY, June 15, 10am-1pm & 7pm-9pm

Alabang Town Center — Lifestyle Workshops with Reviews: Beverages: Savoring Italian Wines, June 14, 4PM; Come as Ice Pumas

Ayala Center Cebu — Dad's Day Treat: A dainty afternoon with Lynn Morrison, June 15, 4PM; Flower Petals & Crystal Intersection

Market! Market! — Thank You Dad: A Father's Day Show, June 14, 8PM; Activity Center; Asian Fusion Living: An Interior Design Forum, March - June '08; Home Section

Christian Life — ONETASTE - The perfect spot for concerts, corporates & corporate events is now accepting bookings for May to June 2008. For inquiries & bookings, pls. call 702-7882 or 727-3001

Ayala Malls Manila Bay — Greater Visions of Heaven On Earth, March - June '08; Home Section

Tri Noma — NBA Madness, June 14-15, Trinoma Activity Center; Exhibit & Runway Launch, June 21, Trinoma Activity Center

Glorietta | Greenbelt | Alabang Town Center | Ayala Center Cebu | Ayala Malls Manila Bay | Tri Noma

HEKBOKSHOE

BY JOMAR TEJIDO

A. LIPAK

BY JESS ABERIN

FULDOK

BY RAFLAND DATUIN PALAMBLANG

PUSAO BABOY

BY RH JUNIOR

DIVINE COMEDY

BY ETHEN PABALINAS

DAILY EFFORTS IN PROVING THE REALITY OF AFTERLIFE

GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS

SALAPHIN

BY DARWIN PEREZ

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBBY

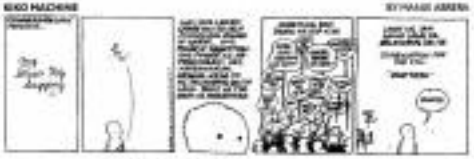
BY LIRA GARCELLANO

LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHONGCO

KIKO MACHINE

BY MANNE ABERIN



BEN

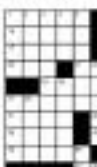
BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Hero's hero
6 Pay back debt
10 Hour preceding midnight
14 Home plate locations
15 Hyatt rivals
16 Comes into view
17 Sprout season
18 Lumberjack part
19 Lumberjack equipment
20 Gets hit
21 Pontificate on
23 Science class
24 All the rage
27 Wedge measurement
29 Kan. team
31 Operatic forte
32 Leash
34 Glazed cooking
36 Shrewd investor
39 Like a boomer?
40 Challenge
42 Memo of Rupert
43 Kuche or Kramer
44 Comical HOPE
47 UP alias one
48 IOU
49 Shut
50 Kind of story or tip
51 Ten cents in value
52 Shark bone
53 Hard to pin down
54 Lachesis, e.g.
57 Dominoes
64 Donned
65 Peach peer
66 Pianist Van Cliburn
67 Pandoras
68 Appear to be
69 Dining or living
70 Dread
71 Dreaded

DOWN
1 Stretched to
2 Pinkeye's pal
3 Lion seeker
4 Ask in advance
5 Highland fling
6 Lines of merriment
7 Thirty-third president
8 Boy on the radar
9 Portions (out)
10 Mediterranean, e.g.
11 From the top
12 Bikini
13 Bowl
21 Ice ball used
22 Film, stamp, etc.
25 Peruvian golden
26 "Monetary" musical
28 Hunting
30 Pitcher at 7th
33 Woolly snake
35 Computer users' forum
37 Lose it
38 Nuisance
39 Bobo or Bassett
41 Actor Nicholas
44 Pitched
45 Among
46 Get even for
47 Cover themselves
51 Homeowner's improvement
53 Shopping mecca
54 Title
55 Apple-core
57 Painful pain
58 Singing syllables
60 Kind of poke
61 Enabled
62 Actress Hatcher

By Norma Steinberg
San Francisco, CA



Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

		8	6	1				
	4				3			
6		5				4		
5		6				1		
7			2			6		
	2				9	5		
		2	9	3	8	7	5	
						8	1	3
							6	9

Difficulty Level ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and progress at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	5	2	3	9	6	8	4	7
9	8	4	7	5	1	2	3	6
7	3	6	4	8	2	9	1	5
3	6	9	8	4	3	1	7	2
8	4	7	1	2	5	6	9	3
2	1	3	6	7	9	5	8	4
6	2	1	9	3	7	4	5	8
4	7	5	2	1	8	3	6	9
5	9	8	5	6	4	7	2	1

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THE THREE-DAY trip to Bangkok for "Maaalaala" was fun, says the actor, who also got VIP treatment in Dubai in 2007.

Coco's Cannes experience

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos courtesy of Coco Martin

"UNLIKE OF THE OUTCOME OF the awards show, we decided that, win or lose, we'll make the most of our trip to Cannes."

Actor Coco Martin was referring to the night of May 20, when the highly coveted Palme d'Or was handed to the French film "Etreinte les ecrits" at the recently concluded 61st Cannes International Film Festival in France.

Coco, who was part of the cast of the red-carpet epic of Emzar Mendoza's "Serbis," had hoped the film would clinch a first-ever victory for the country. "Serbis," the tale of a family operating a rundown movie house in Angeles City, competed in the full-length category.

Praised by Sean Penn

The Philippine entry failed to win, but was reportedly praised by jury head Sean Penn. "He said he liked it. It's heartwarming that someone as big a star as Penn believed in our work," Coco said in an interview a week after arriving from the trip.

"The awards show was so nerve-some that we soon forgot how disappointed we were. We also had a blast at the cocktail party," he recalled.

COCO says he had a blast at the cocktail party of the 61st Cannes IFF.

The trip to Cannes was the seventh international film festival that Coco had attended. His first was the Locarno Festival in Switzerland in 2005 for his debut film, "Masahista," which helped by Mendoza.

The film, the story of a masseur in the big city who goes home to bury his dead father, bagged the Golden Leopard Award. Locarno is widely regarded as the fourth biggest film festival in Europe after Cannes, Berlin and Venice.

Another Mendoza award-winning film, "Serbis," gave Coco the opportunity to see firsthand with co-star Jennifer Bay. The story of a group of prostitutes operating in the busy streets of Quiapo, "Tirador" bagged the Grand Film prize at the Bratislava International Film Festival in Germany.

Coco, 23, will next be seen in the Francis Pasion-Pedro Balisi film "Jay," opposite Baron Geisler. He is a mainstay of "Ligaw na Bulalakal," a soap opera on the Kapamilya Network.

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What ever happened to the other Pinoy films in Cannes

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

A LOT OF INK WAS SPILLED ON Brillante Mendoza's "Serbis," the Philippine entry in the Main Competition of this year's Cannes International Film Festival.

Just as much attention was devoted to the commercial-cinema genius used by Mendoza's film, but hardly any buzz was heard about the two other Filipino movies in Cannes this year: Raya Martin's "Now Showing" in the Director's Fortnight and Pedro Joaquil Valdez' "Bulong" in the non-competition Short Film Corner.

"Now Showing" was reviewed by various international publications, including LA Weekly and The New Straits Times Online.

Scott Foundas of LA Weekly assessed Martin's "20[1]-minute" film alongside Steven Soderbergh's "[20]-minute parody-chapter" "Che."

Foundas described "Now Showing" as a "willful act of defiance" against Hollywood commercialism as exemplified by "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull" which was also screened in the film fest.

Although Foundas conceded that the Pinoy film "is probably better suited to gallery spaces than traditional cinemas," he pointed out that it "offered an extreme example of what could be considered in Cannes 2008's defining trend: its aggressive blurring of whatever boundaries remain, in the YouTube/MySpace/'Blair Witch' era, between documentary and fiction."

Running 4 hours and 30 minutes, Martin's film, which gives "the impression of old home videos exhumed from an attic forever Rosebud," follows a girl named Eli-za from childhood to adulthood, from playing hopscotch in the streets to running her mom's pawnshop left and right.

SCENE from "Bulong"

International critics review 'Now Showing'; 'Bulong' is noticed by Swiss and British film fest organizers

Gregian Zulled of The New Straits Times Online called Martin's work "a small ... experimental film."

Although Zulled also noted the film's home-video look, he acknowledged that "Filipino rightly believes in the nostalgic value of those images and the secrets they can surprise."

Zulled quoted that "the drama [in Martin's film] is [elsewhere] so imperceptible that it takes hold of the viewer like a slow-working poison."

The reviewer added: "a film that fascinates without clearly saying what it's about ... The 'sneak of this young Filipino is yet more evidence that a lot is happening in Southeast Asia. It's been noticed ... in Cannes."

FROM "Now Showing"

Alroy in Cannes screening, Valdez' 30-minute film "Bulong" competed as the 2nd Now Beijing International Movie Week, which ran last week in China.

In a text message, Valdez said that his film had gotten good reviews in France. "We actually received two invitations [organizers of the Locarno Festival/Switzerland and Raindance Festival/England's] film fund so they had planned upon the Berlin/Cannes."

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